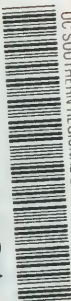


UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A
A
0
0
0
3
7
2
6
0
4
9



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



Days and Legends

OR

BALLADS OF THE NEW WORLD.

The waies through which my weary steps I guye
In this delightful land of Faery,
Are so exceeding spacious and wyde,
And sprinkled with such sweet variety
Of all that pleasant is to eare or eye,
That I nigh ravisht with rare thoughts delight,
My tedious travell do forget thereby,
And when I gin to feel decay of might,
It strength to me supplies, and chears my dulled spright.

SPENCER'S *Faerie Queene*, Book VI.—SIR CALEDORE.

Lays and Legends

OR

BALLADS OF THE NEW WORLD.

BY

G. W. THORNBURY.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1851.

PR
5670
T6221

TO

WASHINGTON IRVING,

ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED WRITERS OF THAT

NEW WORLD

IN WHICH THE SCENE OF THESE POEMS IS PLACED,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

Is Enscribed,

BY AN ENGLISH ADMIRER OF THE SIMPLE PATHOS

AND DELICATE BEAUTY

WHICH SO PECULIARLY DISTINGUISH HIS WORKS.

PREFACE.

DEAR READER, for so I must needs call thee; for is there not a link of sympathy (invisible though it may be) which binds together, for a moment, an hour, a year—and seldom, but still sometimes—*for ever*, him who writeth and him who readeth?

Dear Reader,—I lay humbly at thy feet this small unchased casket of mine, full of pebbles that might have been gathered by any, though hitherto they have been heeded by few. Would to heaven that they were, for thy sake, the richest gems that flame in Golconda, or blaze amid the pine-roots of Potosi. Like a poor vassal bringing his paltry offering to the throne of his satrap and his judge, I cast them at thy feet.

But think not that my trembling ague is altogether that fear which the god Pan impresseth in the craven's heart. I would not say, with poor Keats, "the glorious soul that perished in his pride," "There is no fiercer hell than the failure in a great object." Oh no, I am of

another heresy, equally an error perhaps, but as wide apart as the Gnostick from the Epicurean. A great object irretrievably lost is indeed misery—utter misery; the utterest darkness of despair. But repulse is not a rout; and a bad book I may replace by a better.

But one merit I claim; and that is, of being (poetically at least) the first opener of the entrenchment—the first digger in this mental California.

But one word with ye, *Critical Reader*, before we part, perhaps—though let us hope not—for ever. I pray ye, good masters, worthy sirs, lords and ladies, true men and knaves, squires of low degree, or men of no degree at all, take good heed of what Milton, the blind old man of Lud's great town (one before whom I veil my face), said to ye:—" *Unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man, kills a reasonable creature—God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, the image of God, as it were, in the eye. . . . We should be wary, therefore, how we spill that second life of man preserved and stored up in books.*"

What great words are these, my fellows! and forget not how he goeth on to call books "not absolutely dead things, since they do contain a progeny of life within them;" "nay, they preserve, as in a vial, the purest intellect, and efficacy of that living intellect that bred them."

And what, prithee, think you he denominated the sin whereof ye are so often foully guilty, and which Draco, we are informed, punished with decapitation?—too good a punishment for ye cavilling race of unbelievers—the loss of an empty head for the destruction of the produce of another's brains. He calls it, forsooth—marry come up, who has a better right—a homicide, a martyrdom; and in cases where a whole impression of young innocents, swaddled in white, are left on the bookseller's shelves? a foul sin of a deeper dye—"the slaying of an elemental life," "the striking out of the ethereal and fifth essence," the destruction "of an immortality rather than a life."

Think of this, ye snarlers, and be wise; and when you next slay, like sons of Cain, a bantling of the meanest brain, remunerate the unhappy wight, even if he be a black, by paying his publisher, and repaying his expenses for paper, pens, ink, and the midnight oil, or beware of my vengeance; for, by the nine gods, I swear it—let Pluto record it in his ledger—the next time I meet you, whether in public or private, lane or street, highway or byway, or any other way, I will then and there seize you, as a condor would a chicken, and, grasping you incontinently in the place aforesaid, I will brand with a hot steel pen, upon your narrow forehead, the letter *C*, which the world knows stands for

critic, craven, coward, cuckold, and a thousand other distasteful names.

Farewell, dear reader. We shall travel together for a short stage or two, and then?—why, if you remember me as a pleasant, merry companion, my vocation is done.

I trust that thou wilt at least say of me what bald Cæsar said of the noble Brutus when still adolescent:—

“I know not well what this young man wishes, but what he does wish, he wishes VEHEMENTLY.”—VALE.

The curtain falls.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

	PAGE
1. Columbus	12
2. Columbus in Chains.	29
3. The Battle of Tobasco	36
4. The Tears of Cortes.	40
5. The Sorrowful Night	49
6. The Murder of Pizarro.	58
7. The Death of Old Carbajal.	67
8. The Procession of the Dead	77
9. The Descent of the Volcano	82

PART II.

TRANSLATIONS.

The Diver (Schiller).	91
The Rainbow (Schiller)	96
The Huron's Death-Song (Schiller)	96
The Old Mariner (Pape)	98
The Dance of Death (Göthe)	99
The Lion's Journey (Freiligrath)	100
The Pines (Freiligrath)	103
The Sea-Waif (Freiligrath)	106
A Ritornel (Rückert)	108
The Wind (From the old Welsh of the bard Taliesin)	109

LAYS.		PAGE
Hastings		111
The Arraignment of the Dead		115
The Death of Rufus.		117
The Rebel Earl		121
King Edmund (a Saxon ballad).		124
Decius		127
Curtius		131

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Hymn of the Salian Priests.	134
The Pilgrim's Departure	136
The Miller's Song	138
The Woodman's Song	140
Lines written in an Old Tower in North Wales	142
The War-Song of the Welsh Borderers	143
The Gathering Song of the Kings of Harlech	144
The Demon Oak (a Welsh legend).	145
The Wye	148
The Eagle Tower	149
March	149
Lines on an Old Coin	150
February	151
The Pimpernel	152
Flowers	153
The Norseman's War-Song	154
May	155
Old Letters	156
A Warning Worde	157

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

SCENE I. ACT 1.

(Author enters, hems loudly and nervously twice, like Puff, in The Critic, blows his nose with a red bandana, wipes his spectacles, looks round, and then begins. Two in the reserved seats, and one in the back benches.)

PERHAPS no portion of mediæval history presents a track at once so untrodden, so inviting, and so deserving of research, as that of the commencement of the fifteenth century,¹ for then Europe attained her fullest maturity, monarchies grew settled, the feudal system was smitten to the heart, and a new world and a greater world sprang to life.

Of the great events that convulsed and awe-struck mankind at this most eventful age, only a few historians, and still fewer poets, have written. Put but a foot within the portals of this enchanted land, the region of practical romance and of chivalry in action, and you see, stretching far before you, in a gorgeous and endless vista, climes teeming with undiscovered treasures, wide tracts as replete with riches, and as unknown, as was the New World itself that gave them birth, when it

first met the astonished eyes of Columbus and his crew, or the scenes that Nunez saw :

“ When, with eagle eye
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other, with a wild surmise,
Silent upon a peak in Darien.”

In the yellow and mouldy pages of the old military and monkish chronicles of the Spanish Conquest, lie hid, or, till lately, lay hid, unsung, untold, a thousand deeds of heroism, a thousand feats of arms more worthy of eternal fame—though the lust of gold and conquest, and the tenets of a cruel superstition nerved the arms that dealt the blow—than the fabled prowess of a Hector, or the cruel ferocity of an Achilles.

In many a chapter do we find unknown Cæsars immortalized, Bayards of champions, whose fierce wars, and scenes of high emprise, want only a larger field to rise to the endless glory of Hannibal or Alexander.
Carent vate sacro.

There are entombed, in forbidding and unattainable folios, adventures worthy of that giant race whom the Greeks thought were the sons of the demi-gods, and the ancestors of the modern tribes. Ah ! men with high throbbing hearts, with heads of statesmen and arms of warriors, whose only pleasure was, not the foppery of military attire, or the dull monotony of the parade, but whose dearest joy was in the tented field, the war trump their only music, God's sky their only canopy, their cross-hilted sword the emblem that taught them at once to remember their Saviour's bitter pains, and to defend and battle for his faith.

The sturdy conquerors of the New World were men not buoyed up by the certainty of conquest over feeble,

effeminate, and despicable antagonists ; they were often poor, half-starved, badly equipped adventurers, who, leaping on shore from their wretched caravels, threw themselves at the head of their lion-hearted but scanty band, upon the gilded emperors of the west, and who strode onwards to conquest or to death, without even the poor resource of the security to escape. Like the solitary pioneer in the primeval forests of the north, they hewed their way with "bloody axe" through "thronging helms" and "serried shields in thick array of depth immeasurable," cleaving deep lanes through the dark squadrons that barred their way to the golden cities, and never resting till they had cleft the heart of their colossal monarch that stood between earth and heaven, like the supporter of the great Domdaniel. These were the men who realized the supernatural endurance of a Prometheus, who never "hedged aside from the direct forthright"—"the very firstlings of their hearts were the firstlings of their hands;"—their native hue of resolution was never "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Their bodies were iron and their souls of fire. They carried the bounds of the possible a dozen leagues "further into chaos:" they were men whom earth could not daunt, and scarcely heaven.

But of this temper were all the fierce brood of Alexanders that subjugated the old empires of the New World, and it is on their "bright peculiar stars" that we would chiefly dwell; in whose great minds shone reflected all the heroic virtues of their age, stained by the smallest quantity of baser alloy.

Foremost amongst all stands Columbus, the Genoese, rather a "bright intelligence" than a man—a hero in heart, and a saint in life—who, amid the toil of a blame-

less life, from shadowy fables and inane legends elaborated the discovery of another world. He "shunned delights and lived laborious days;" he brooded over the thoughts alone—unheeded, worse than unheeded, despised, jeered at, mocked at as a madman by the basest churl; *alone*, in mysterious converse with his own mighty soul; in youth, in age, he waited for the sun of truth to burst through the clouds that overhung his mind. It was not till almost in the decline of his years it shone full upon him, unsullied by a passing vapour. Then his indomitable genius threw itself upon the long hoped-for prey, and with calm and unruffled grandeur he disclosed to the dazzled world the realm which his intuitive wisdom had discovered, and his undaunted energy had wrung from the regions of the unknown.

They stream past us in shadowy bands, those stern vanquishers of the great cities of the sun—the conquerors and the conquered. Some wear upon their brows the "round and top of sovereignty," some "two fold balls and treble sceptres" bear.

There passes by grim Cortes, who thought of conquest as he died, and Pizarro, a stern shape, his grey hair worn with the helmet and "dabbled in blood."

COLUMBUS, CORTES, and PIZARRO, are indeed the great triumvirate, in whose lives are interwoven all that is great, astonishing, and chivalrous in the discovery of the New World. In the first great mind was developed all the religious and sublimated enthusiasm that won another continent from the realms of night; in the second, the stern spirit that trod in his steps, and stained with blood the crucifix planted in the new found land; in the third, the cruel appetite for blood and gold, that completed the conquest, defiled the

new-born civilization, and disgraced the Spanish name for ever.

Cortes was a dissolute soldier, with but slender education, distinguished only for courage, success in intrigue, and a mutinous spirit; who, like Cæsar, rising like an eagle from the base vices on which he fed, soared at once to the highest pitch of human daring, displaying in riper manhood the hot courage of his earliest youth, with the scientific and intuitive glance of one of those great conquerors whom God sends forth at times to smite the nations. "He came—he saw—he conquered;" burning the fleet that afforded him the only hopes of retreat; tearing away the superstitious fears that gnawed at his heart, he strode forward with the standard of the Cross, and wrested from the hold of the awe-struck Montezuma a realm whose very children might have slain the "white faces," the children of the true God, "with stick and stone," "in puny battle."

We find this rude brawling trooper escaping from a dungeon, to exhaust every stratagem, every argument that can excite the soldier's mind, and nerve it for the field—

"Like the wind's blast, never resting, homeless;
They stormed across the war convulsed earth."

never pausing in victory—never wearying of defeat, each repulse giving experience and insuring fresh success—till he had bound the rich and wide dominions of the western shores to Spain.

And last of all came Pizarro—the Hannibal to this Cæsar—the son of the poor swineherd—the true Spaniard—cold, superstitious, brave, and cruel. Disdaining to tarry in a country he had helped to conquer, and already

bare from the hands of the pillager, he crosses the Andes—the Alps of the western lands—and bursts like a thunder-storm upon another region still richer in its innumerable treasures.

Wonderful Spain ! so prolific of great men !—whose prime was so glorious and so transitory ; compressing into two short centuries the hopeful splendour of a sunrise, the equal brightness of meridian day, and the saddening gorgeousness of a summer sunset. Great land of the fifth Charles ! who sighed for new worlds, and they sprang to being ;—of Ximenes, the warrior and statesman-priest ;—of Gonzalvo, most chivalrous and patriotic of generals, whom kings deigned to envy ;—of Ferdinand and Isabella, monarchs on whom fortune never frowned. Spain was the great power of the fifteenth century :—all potent was her domination ; all puissant and irresistible her sway. High on her throne of two continents, she looked “ o’er half the world.” Italy did her homage. The seven-hilled city received her armies, and within another century Portugal was chained to her embattled throne. Her name was the terror of Germany, the seat of religious life. Her armies, numerous as the hydra’s head, sprang from her soil like the seed of the dragon’s-teeth.

Unintermittingly for full a century, from her fair sierras and her ancient towns, the fair land of sunny Spain poured forth an armed swarm of gallant, hair-brained adventurers, with swords to be hired and pockets to be filled, in the golden continent already discovered, or with the pearls of islands still to be conquered by the fearless and brave ; destructive as the locust, they spread over mountain and through forest, leaving their white unburied bones their only monuments, to

warn those who should come after. Against the pagan Indian, battling for his freedom, they turned the swords they had already fleshed against the armies of the Andalusian Moor; and against the cruel Carib they did deeds of valour that move our admiration, though, to a modern age, and to a cooler, less generous, and more reflecting courage, they appear fabulous, and, even if they are true, Quixotic. "The ocean chivalry" proved truth stranger than fiction.

Who can deny that the lives of these early conquerors were stained by the darkest vices of a rude and chaotic age? True, but they shared the virtues of those manners and of that age, and of those virtues of which modern civilization, with all its boasted merits, may well lament the loss. Let us pity, if we cannot shut our eyes to these vices; let us forget their savage superstition, the fiendish cruelty, and the debasing thirst for gold. O think only of their generous and unreflecting bravery, their indomitable daring, and their unmatched endurance.

Do not our hearts glow within us at the bare recital of deeds which man has performed, and which man may again perform? Now chivalry had left the land, and "launched upon the deep," what a strange blending do we find of the swelling chivalrous spirit of the man-at-arms, of the pirate, the fanatic, and the sordid adventurer.

"The Spanish cavalier," says Washington Irving, "had embarked in the caravel of the discoverer. He carried into the trackless wildernesses of the New World the same contempt of danger, and fortitude under suffering,—the same reckless, restless, and roaming spirit,—the same passion for inroad and savage and vainglorious

exploit,—and the same fervent, and often bigoted, zeal for the propagation of his faith, that had distinguished him during his warfare with the Moors. Instances will be found in the extravagant career of the daring Ojeda, particularly in his adventures along the coasts of Terra Firma and the wild shores of Cuba; in the sad story of the unfortunate Nicuesa, graced as it is with occasional touches of high-bred courtesy; in the singular cruise of that brave but credulous old warrior, Juan Ponce de Leon, in his search after an imaginary fountain of youth; and, above all, in the chequered fortunes of Vasco Nunez de Balboa, whose discovery of the Pacific Ocean forms one of the most beautiful and striking incidents in the history of the New World. The extraordinary actions and adventures of these men leave us enrapt in admiration of the bold and heroic qualities of the Spanish character.”

It was not in the hour of victory that these heroes showed the noblest qualities of their mind. It was on the toilsome march, when famine and the poisoned dart decimated a scanty band, without a general, without a guide, in an unknown, trackless, and, above all, hostile country. Such were the incidents that attended the return of the army of Hernando de Soto, who conquered Florida; which equals and resembles, in many material points, the famous retreat of the Ten Thousand; while the intrepid advance of Cortes into the interior of Mexico, at the head of a small army, whose courage he had never tried, and of whose fidelity he was uncertain, is not surpassed by the courage of the twenty thousand men with whom Alexander struck down the unwieldy bulk of Persia.

We cannot conclude our remarks on this discovery—

the greatest triumph of science—without adding a few observations upon its effects on the European mind. Let us imagine for a moment, the soul-stirring sensations of mankind, when in a moment, without one blast of herald's trumpet, a new world full of riches, peopled by strange beings, speaking an unknown language, and girt round by clusters of tributary isles, whose treasures were of gold and countless pearls, became realized to fancy's view. Imagine the astonishment of those who thought the world already nodding to its fall, who prophesied that its destruction within a century was as certain as the rising of the sun to-morrow—of those who thought that man had attained his maximum of happiness (poor as it was), and of improvement, small as that might be,—and that beyond this barriers were set up, on which were inscribed, by God himself, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further."

Open-mouthed wonder grew sated with the tales of travellers, credulity grew an uninquiring recipient of the wildest descriptions of "antres vast, and deserts wild, rough quarries, rocks and hills, whose heads touch heaven,"—

"And of the cannibals, that each other eat ;
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders." * *

Men began to chide themselves for foolish scepticism. Alchemy and judicial astrology thrived apace even in the courts of kings. The vulgar, on the very eve of the rise of a new system of philosophy* that would revolutionize the world of science, attributed the every-day ills of life to the agency of witches and hobgoblins.

* Bacon's.

Superstition and excess of faith began to resume their ancient and abused usurpation over the human mind, and to trample upon rebellious reason. The discovery of the New World gave a vast impulse to the imaginative faculty. To it we are mainly indebted for the bright galaxy of our own Elizabethan writers, those golden constellations that revolve round Shakspeare, as the universe around its central sun; the distant ripples we feel in our own time, but its greatest result upon the world at large was, the memorable and lamentable re-action that followed the first outburst of the Reformation.

Shakspeare's "Tempest" may show what effect it produced on the individual and poetical mind. That twilight obscurity that borders on the sublime, overhung the new found regions of the west. Their extent, geographical position, and riches, remained for a full century alike indefinite; what was known but heightened the expectation for the secret that lay hid. The people were warlike, generous, devoted to their caciques, but eaters of human flesh and worshippers of the sun. No rude age of barter heralded the discovery of the tribes of the north or south.

Such were the conquered; the conquerors were "of imagination all compact." With no longer parley than Sir Amadis de Gaul would have held with those dark crowds of spectres that throng the shores of enchanted islands in the old romances, the Spaniards rushed upon their foe, a crucifix in one hand and a sword in the other. With a handful of pikemen and arquebusiers they bounded onwards upon a path of fame and riches, open to the meanest. They chased the king who wore the feather crown from his jewelled throne, and hunted

him like a beast of prey though his native forests. Into the galley these savage adventurers threw themselves, like the knights of the "Mort-d'Arthur," in quest of kingdoms and empires to be conquered. Strange vicissitudes were daily to be seen; to-day, a bravo in the streets of Seville, begging for relief at a convent gate, to-morrow, lord of a hundred islands.

It was the sunset of chivalry; a gorgeous pageantry of coloured clouds and golden light hid its descent in the west into the dark ocean of oblivion.

With these remarks I must close my introductory chapter, trusting that the novelty and interest of my subject may attract an attention which the poetry may not merit. If I have but helped to fill the trench with my body, which another may pass over to scale the wall—if I have launched forth in a bark in which another may visit the shores I have described—if one warm feeling of my heart is responded to by the reader, I shall gladly own my defeat, well satisfied if I have served but as a finger-post to point to a rare nook in fairy land, a short ramble in which may repay the reader for his trouble, and divert for one brief hour the carking recollections of the world's cares and the world's sorrows.

PART I.

BALLADS OF THE NEW WORLD.

No. I.

COLUMBUS.

[THE great Christopher Columbus, who gave a new world to Spain, was the son of a Genoese wool-comber. He early evinced an uncontrollable passion for a maritime life ; and, while yet a stripling, fought against the fleets of Venice. Visiting Portugal, he maintained himself by selling charts. Slowly he elaborated his great discovery, till it flashed upon him with the certainty of a secret disclosed from Heaven. After years of torturing suspense in the courts of princes, during which he must have suffered more sadness of the inmost soul than even his great countrymen, Dante and Tasso, or even our own Spenser, Columbus obtained the patronage he needed ; furnished with scanty and tardily afforded aid, from the pious and warm-hearted Queen of Spain ; tacitly encouraged by the cold and calculating Ferdinand, and zealously assisted by a speculative shipowner, he set forth one day in August from Palos, a small fishing town in Andalusia ; and, with a desponding and superstitious crew, launched boldly into an unknown ocean, to discover an unknown world. Who is ignorant of the greatest triumph of genius ? Within a month he landed on the shore of St. Salvador.]

"TWAS a sunny eve in August, when three caravels* set
forth,
Not for the orange-teeming south, not for the icy north ;
No furs to bring from a colder clime, no freight of the
golden ore,
No glittering sand from the naked chiefs of Afric's
distant shore ;

* A caravel was the name of a vessel in the time of Columbus.

Not bound to the land of the Genoese, who rear the
marble piles—

Not bound to the land of the myrtle-grove, where the
heaven ever smiles.

If one could tell where the soul shall go when the
body's in the grave,
Then he might say what unknown land they seek
across the wave.

No exiled serfs were the mariners who ploughed the
western foam,
That sought some hut, some resting-place, they still
might call a home.

On the blood-red track the sun had left upon the
burning sea,
Like staunch slot-hounds on a bleeding boar, flew fast
those vessels three ;

To the setting sun they sailed away, but no bold hearts
manned the bark,
For their hopes had sunk with the sinking sun, ere the
coming night grew dark :

Like men in a dream, they furled the sail, or spread it
to the wind,
And the ghastly forms of a fevered sleep rose up in each
coward mind :

They feared no heat of the tropic sun, nor the cold
north's freezing air,
But worse than death it seemed to them, to sail—they
knew not where.

The mass had been sung in Palos town when the sun
was still o'er head,
When it shed its cheering golden light from the heavens
flaming red ;

And the boldest hearts had louder throbbed when they
heard the parting prayer ;
Amidst those kneeling mariners, but one looked joyful
there.

When, from the heights of Rabida,* to the shores of the
deep-voiced sea,
Came the solemn sound of the vesper-bell, so sad—so
mournfully ;

Like the mournful voice of their fatherland, bidding a
last farewell,
Came on the breeze of the evening, the sigh of the
convent bell ;

When down to the edge of the brown sea-beach fol-
lowed the weeping crowd,
On one ear alone unheeded fell that mournful sobbing loud.

None knew what dangers they might meet in the
regions of Zapan,†
What pathless seas might intervene ere they saw the
crowned khan ;

What fiery waves, what crags of ice, might sweep their
ships away,
Ere they traversed the leagues that sever Spain from
the clime of the rich Cathay.‡

Could human power these ills avert? Oh none but a
hand divine ;
They kneel to the saint, whose triple fires§ on the mast
in the tempest shine.

* The convent at whose grate Columbus halted for a morsel of bread, and was dissuaded by the good prior from his intention of leaving Spain on the morrow.

† Columbus professed his intention of visiting all the unknown parts of India.

‡ China.

§ St. Elmo's fires, a phosphorescent light, seen during a storm at sea.

They raise a hymn to the saint whose flame is a type of
the Trinity,

When the thunder bursts and rives the cloud, and
shakes the earth and sea.

Down their bronzed cheeks the salt tears roll ; but one
cheek is still unstained—

One eye shone bright as the heaven's arch when the
summer's storm has waned.

When the helmsman's voice grew tremulous, one voice
was loud and clear,

One voice spoke hope and comfort, and bad the faint
heart cheer.

And when from the shore receding came the wailing
through the air,

Columbus' cheek was still unblenched as he joined in
the parting prayer.

With such a band no deed was done of glory or of
fame ;

Who with a crew of cravens could win a deathless
name?

High on the prow the hero knelt, and pointed to the
west,

Where mid a halo of golden light the sun had sunk to rest ;

Like the glow on the face of a dying saint, it melted in
the sky,

Like a crowned and mighty conqueror preparing him
to die.

Like some bold diver seeking pearls in the far Indian
sea,

Down went the sun in the fiery west, with just such
frantic glee.

And the waves of night closed o'er his head, as slowly
to her throne
Came holy night, without a star, untended and alone.

The parting smile of the grey old sun was "sweet as
sweet might be,"
As the last faint smile of a martyr as beautiful to see ;

* * * *

And He turned to the crew with a holy awe, as the pale
light lit his face,
" On, on to the promised land," he cried, " to the sun's
bright resting-place !

" 'Twas but last night, as I fell asleep by the bark
drawn on the strand,
That an angel showed me in a dream the glories of that
land—

" It was no land of scorched rocks ; but from its balmy
bowers
Rose up to a sky unstained by cloud, the scent of a
thousand flowers ;

" Where the flashing birds were fair as flowers, and the
flowers as fair as gems,
And the forests' floors were paved with fruit, dropped
from a myriad stems.

" I saw its groves and its silver streams, and it seemed
to my dazzled eyes
Like the glimpse a suffering soul might catch of the
blessed Paradise ;

" And in that single moment's glance I felt myself
repaid
For toil and woe, and promises forgot as soon as made."

Far at the stern sunk distant Spain, and the waves
grew black with night ;
In vain they gazed, for a gathering cloud hid the land
from the aching sight ;

With that purple line that fades away, not home alone
they left,
But wife and child, and all that's dear, the ocean had
bereft.

Before them lay a world of waves, a kingdom never
seen ;
A desert track, where, since the Flood, no venturous
keel had been.

Just as the Deluge left it, when the bow shone in the
sky—
Unstirred by wind, unheaved by storm—those silent
waters lie.

Swift through the air, like Allah's bolt,* at an erring
spirit cast
A flaming star, like a fallen lamp, from the vault of
heaven past.

Unmoved Columbus sitteth there, while the night wind
keener blew,
His eye on the needle ever bent, as the ship o'er the
still sea flew.

The monster fish with vacant eyes, white as the Venice
glass,†
Looks up from out his ocean lair, to see those vessels
pass.‡

* The Moors, with whom the Spaniards were at this time so familiar, both as their conquerors and captives, had a tradition that falling stars were arrows, shot by Allah at the evil spirits who dared to venture too near the portals of heaven.

† Venice at this era was famous for her manufactures of the rarest glass.

‡ " Strange things came up to look at us,
The monsters of the deep."—*Barry Cornwall.*

With a blaze of joy, the stars leapt forth, and with a
lambent glare,
A cross* of flame to guide the bark, lit up the midnight
air.

“Great God be thanked !” Columbus cries, as its bright-
ness lit his brow ;
“Ye faithless men, take comfort—what further want ye
now?”

Faster the white-winged Pinta skimmed, like a sea-mew
o’er the wave,
Like a spendthrift son it joyed to fly from the land that
the salt floods lave.

*

*

*

The bright sun shone on the sleeping sea, and the holy
daylight came,
And sunk in the glory that it rose, on clouds and waves
of flame.

And so it rose, and so it sank, for a weary month of
days,
For those weary men, each coming morn, less brightly
shone its rays.

Still† as in mock of the rising hope, the distant land
seemed sea,
And the piled-up clouds seemed a distant land, framed
for eternity.

And every day, at close of eve, the “ave Marias” sung,
High over head, from the watchman’s nest, the listening
sailor clung.

* The *Southern Cross*, a constellation peculiar to the western
hemisphere.

† The crew of the Pinta were frequently deceived by imaginary
appearances of land.

By day, the sun, to molten gold turned the ocean's
boundless plain,
By night, the moon, on their gleaming track, showered
down her silver rain.

'Tis a month since they passed old Teneriffe, where
none would dare to dwell,
That flames in the broad, unbroken sky, an aperture of
hell.*

Yes! a month has fled since Ferro, last land that came
in sight,
Last link that binds the earth to sea, fled from them with
the night.

Oh! it seemed to them a thousand years, that journey
o'er the sea,
As long as to foolish, ardent youth, seem the years of
infaney.

Full of dark gnawing doubts and fears was that pale
and trembling crew,
And still, like a hideous fevered dream, greater their
terror grew.

Lost in the flood of deep despair, those weak and coward
men,
Had heeded not if the mighty God from the sky had
spoken then.

They heard no thunderings of his voice, when his light-
nings shone abroad,
By the wind's deep whisper of his name, they never had
been awed.

* That volcanoes were entrances to the infernal regions was
the common belief of the age.

They muttered tales of a frozen sea, where burrows the
ocean snake,
Of ghastly things and changing forms that followed in
their wake.

Where, 'mid the trunks of the coral wood the Kraken's
the only swimmer,
And his fiery eye, the sand-paved deeps lights with a
ghastly glimmer.

In vain Columbus bids them pray, for prayer lulls fears
to rest,
In vain he points to the clouds that bar their view of
the distant west,

Points with the glance of a conqueror, who waits but
for the day,
To tear from the sea-god's hidden world, the veil of
time away.

Then angry threats they mutter, as they group around
the mast,
And gaze on the thousand leagues of sea their caravels
have passed.

And all their hopes of a golden land beyond that
boundless sea,
Seem idle thoughts of a summer's eve, a madman's
fantasy.

And the moonlight threw, on the narrow deck, the
shadow of the mast,
And told by the bar on the silver'd plank, that the
middle watch had past.

In vain Columbus talks of hope, and points to the
swelling sail,
While the caravel, as it knew not toil, flies in the
freshened gale.

Still from the prow Columbus gazed at the cross in the
pale, clear sky,
And smiles as he points to the gathering weed that
slowly drifteth by.

And many a dolphin swimmeth past, king of the western
sea,
Whose robe is rich with the sparkling dyes, a rich-clad
prince is he.

And the flying fish, that like a bird soars from his coral
bough,
Who dives as deep as he can fly, beneath the white
reef's brow.

And with the morn the wind sinks down, and birds on
the rigging rest,
They seem belated wanderers from some land in the
distant west.

For these resting-birds are no white-winged mews, no
flitterers o'er the main,
But such as follow the husbandman, that sows the
golden grain.

And again those birds, with untiring wing, on their
pathless journey fly,
Still seems the far horizon, all land, and sea, and sky.

Still with the dawn the hope grows less of the long-
expected land,
For the ocean seems to gird the earth with its broad and
crystal band.

Columbus on the angered crew from the high prow
gazeth down,
As louder grew the muttered curse, and darker grew
the frown.

One blew the match of a caliver,* and scornful gnashed
his teeth,
And one half drew a dagger from out its hidden
sheath.

“What hope of life,” those cowards cried, “from human
help so far,
When the needle† once, as the dial true, points no
longer to its star?

“The demon’s spell that draws us on, so far across the
tide,
Hath, in an hour of dearest need, thus tampered with
our guide.

“If God above should spare us now, this changeless
wind will swell,‡
And bar us from our homeward course, like a torrid
blast from hell.”

With hollow cheek and fixed eye Columbus gazes on,
Till the coal-black darkness melts away, at the sight of
the dawning sun.

With the early night his lanthorn gleams from the prow
o’er the heaving sea,
The first on the watch at the break of dawn, and the
last to rest is he.

Loud grew the threats, still louder; their thoughts were
thoughts of guilt;
And many a hand, with a curse, was laid on the ready
dagger-hilt.

* The musket of that day.

† The sailors of Columbus were much alarmed by the compass
losing its wonted power.

‡ The wind blew unceasingly from the east.

And round the fire dark faces grouped, all lurid with
the gleam,
As on the face of a shepherd falls the red morning's
beam.

"What does a madman think of fear, of home, of child,
of wife?
What does a madman, seeking gold, care for Castilian's
life?

"Look at the frantic dreamer, as he gazes from the
prow—
Still as the statue of a saint, with his high and thought-
ful brow.

"Why should a noble Spaniard die at the beck of a
Genoese?
Why rush to death, while still there's hope, a madman's
eye to please?

"If he still will on, like the crew of old let's throw the
sleeper o'er,
To seek, like a second Jonah, the groves of his golden
shore.

"Ere three days, Columbus, list you, their weary course
have run,
We hie us home!" Columbus cried, "God's holy will
be done!"

And his face was passionless as one who hears the
chiming hour;
They could not choose but wonder. 'Twas God who
gave that power.

Then hushed grew those fierce voices, and sunk to a
pious awe,
When on his knees, in silent prayer, that mariner they
saw.

And with the whispered word of fear, they saw, as it
 floated past,
With the sea-weed hung, with the sea-shell bossed, a
 swiftly drifting mast.

But three days more of carking fear, three days to tempt
 the main,
Then to the land of rich Seville they speed them home
 again.

The first day dawns, and the birds of land more frequent
 hurry by;
Sad evening comes, and its cloudy pall blots daylight
 from the sky;

Another day, and thicker drifts the floating sea of
 weed,
And the bark ploughs on its hopeless course through
 shoals of the upturn weed.

The fatal morn!—in the bright clear vault the sun is up
 on high,
But still no glimpse of purple coast, and all around is
 sky.

Then bright hope fell in Columbus' mind, like a star
 that falls at eve;
But the voice of an unseen Comforter forbad his heart
 to grieve.

The sun set bright in his realm of cloud, as the sailors
 sank to rest,
And darkness broods with outstretched wings on the
 silent ocean's breast.

Sweet blew the breeze of evening—sweet as a breeze of
 May;
And it fanned Columbus' burning cheek at the closing
 of the day.

As o'er the meadows of Seville breathes the floweret-
kissing gale,
So, soft and mild, that gentle breeze braced on the idle
sail.

And he thought of the ocean breezes upon the bay's
broad sand,
Where first, as a child, he saw the barks of his own
mountain land.*

It seemed to his fever-heated mind the breath of an
angel soft,
As through the shrouds, with a pleasant tune, it rustled
up aloft.

Ah! who can tell the anguish fierce, the wrench that
rends the heart,
When the one long-nourished hope of life must from the
bosom part.

But still, like a genius of the sea, he sits on the thronéd
prow,
Though the cold dew fell on his burning cheek and on
his fevered brow.

Has some deadly moonbeam† struck him? Why stares
he through the night?
What means that gleam on the good ship's lee—that
speck of fiery light?

“Great God be thanked! 'tis a beacon's flame, to light
us to the land;
'Tis the torch of a midnight wanderer on the long-
expected strand.”

* The Bay of Genoa.

† The Mediterranean sailors say that moonlight blisters the face
and even produces fevers.

Long seems the night,—with leaden steps slow steal the
hours away,
It seems a life, a thousand lives, ere the dawning of the
day.

And he calls the sleepers to his side, and bids them hail
the morn,
As o'er the land of promise it slowly 'gins to dawn.

What thoughts were his! with what boundless joy his
mighty heart is full!
He felt like a conquering Cæsar might when he mounted
the Capitol.

The day has dawned on the promised land—no land of
idle dreams—
On a land of boundless forests, of mountains, and of
streams.

'Tis but the porch to a thousand realms, washed by the
peaceful sea;
A thousand isles in the distant west may there all
hidden be.

Like men awakened from a dream by the shake of a
hasty hand,
With wild amaze, and cries of joy, gazed then the rebel
band.

For their last long thought had been of home, by weary
day and night—
Now strangely in their dazzled eyes shone the unex-
pected sight.

And still the *madman* gazeth there, on the high and
stately prow;
As when they sank to welcome sleep, so still he gazeth
now.

Then shame stole o'er their softened hearts, and they
bended low the knee,
And cried, "All hail, Columbus! St. George* has
blessed thee!"

"Long live the king of the boundless seas! long may
the great one reign,
Who has added a vast and unknown land to the monar-
chy of Spain.

"Hail! to the mighty genius—the heaven-gifted man—
Who has planted the cross on the Indian shore,† in the
region of the Khan!

"Who has torn from the sea the secret, long hid from
the light of day—
Hail! to the land of the western sky, that catches the
last red ray.

"Hail! to the man who, with dauntless breast, sought
through the bellowing deep
The spot where, since the world was young, the sun has
sunk to sleep."

*

*

*

There first since the birth of aged Time the wandering
savage hears
A hymn to the Virgin sung by men whose cheeks are
bathed in tears.

High o'er the trees with the golden fruit, those matted
forests o'er,
Waves high the blazon of Castille upon the new-found
shore;

* St. George is the patron saint of Genoa.

† It is remarkable that to the day of his death, Columbus
believed the land he had discovered, to be a remote part of
India.

And, stamped on the folds of the Spanish flag, for each
mariner to see,
Waves high the sign of the holy cross, the cross of Cal-
vary.

At the bearer's feet, with tears of joy, as at some good
saint's shrine,
The seamen fall, for his calm pale face glows with a light
divine.

And thus, in the old world's dotage, a fairer land was
born,
As, when the western sky grows pale, flames up the
eastern dawn.

No. II.

COLUMBUS IN CHAINS.

[BOWED to the earth by the petty intrigues of a foreign court ; disgusted with the cold gratitude of the sovereign who had benefited by the noble enterprise, which he had not aided ; reviled by the envious ; cursed by the disappointed ; hated by the proud, whom his great soul disdained to court ; as a climax to his sufferings he was thrown into prison by the illegal sentence of the governor, of the very island of which he himself had been ruler. His release was soon obtained. The good and the noble demanded it with a common voice. Poor and neglected he returned to Spain, to wait, as in his early days, an unheeded suitor at the doors of the great ; and he died, after two years of misery and ineffectual prosecution of his claims, quite broken-hearted,—an example while the world lasts—of the extreme bounds of national ingratitude.]

LIKE a prisoned genius of the air, bound to this nether world ;

Like an eastern king with sceptre broke, and from his proud throne hurled ;

On his dungeon floor, wrapped in his cloak, the chained Columbus lies ;

Though the sunbeam gilds the prison wall, he raiseth not his eyes.

Oh ! how unlike that gallant chief who leapt on the Indian strand,

When his eyes glared bright with a wild amaze* at a new and wondrous land.

Is this what Spain in her bounty gives ? is her best reward—a chain ? †

Are fetters meet for him who gave a new world to her reign ?

* Keats.

† Columbus desired his son, with almost his last breath, to bury these chains with him.

No golden badge, with the bright stone decked, which
the great of the earth might win;
But the felon's iron fetter the soul that eateth in—

That feeds on the cramped and festering flesh, that
crushes the limbs to earth,
Like the banded snake of the torrid zone, the tropic's
monster birth—

Who, the Carib asleep in the forest's depth, in scaly link
twines round,
Like a pinioned soul in hell below, the sleeping wretch
is bound.

“Will God permit the fiends of Ind shall thus avenge
their loss
On the man who first on those Pagan shores planted the
holy cross?

“Was it not enough that for bitter years, they mocked
my frenzied brain,
And I watered the bread that alms had bought, with the
heaven dropping rain?

“God knows, I never ventured life for honour or
estate;
Let him who boasts of charity, weep o'er my wretched
fate.

“For years I knelt at the noble's foot, bent low to kiss
his hand;
And bore unmoved the menial's mock, the scoff of the
vassals' band.

“Till, from the cold dull sleep of years, like a spirit of
the blest,
I rose on the wings of the angels, and sought the golden
west.

“When, 'neath a radiant veil of light, I found the land
I sought,
Rich as a ship of the Indian seas, my soul with peace
was fraught.

“Then when I sought my highest flight, and soared to
the distant west,
The shaft of a churl flew soaring up, and pierced the
eagle's breast.

“But, oh! this carking fetter, to him who once had fame,
Is nought to the sneer that brands the brow, to the
curse that blasts the name.

“Great God be thanked, no sin of mine hath earned the
cruel scoff;
I lie at peace, though at hour of *prime* my head were
stricken off.

“No leaden shame weighs at my heart, my brow no red
shame scars,
When the jeering face that mocks my grief, looks through
the prison bars.

“Though on the block, ere break of day, this heart its
throb should cease,
Still broods on the mind that's lulled to rest, the halcyon
of peace.

“God knows, I loved no dross of gold; no other hope
was mine
From my early youth, but on that shore to plant the
cross divine.

“If this life were spared, I would but seek the land of
the Son of God—*
The thorny soil, that with bleeding feet, the blessed
Jesu trod.

* Columbus was almost the last person who entertained the
project of a crusade to recover the holy sepulchre.

“ If every knee were bowed to me, if the crown of Spain
were mine,
I would but drive the Infidel from holy Palestine.

“ And prayer and chant should purify the tomb that the
Turk defiled—
The sacred spot where in fiendish rage blasphemes the
desert child.”

* * * * *

Then God sent sleep, with its breath of balm, through
the dungeon spread its beam,
And gentle thoughts of happier days blend with the
coming dream.

And a pageant greets the prisoner, as he closed his
weary eye,
A troop of dream-like visions came swiftly dreaming
by.

Again he stands on Genoa's rocks, and gazes o'er the
sea,
And mused, as sank the setting sun, where the land of
the dead may be.

He sees, though Genoa all seems changed, and every-
thing grows dark,
A child among his playmates floating a paper bark.

And he sees the well known caravel, with its broad and
flowing sheet,
With the cry of “ St George for Genoa,” bear down on
the Pisan fleet.

Again he trod the cloister by Pavia's ancient tower ;
Again he bent o'er the well-worn chart, in the lone mid-
night hour.

He sees at the gate of a convent, a wanderer ask for
bread ;
As the stranger takes the proffered alms, his pallid cheek
grows red.

Again a change—a well-known form o'er a map of sea
and isle,
Bends at the hour of twilight, seen but by God the while.

And the holy prior and Pinzon sit in the convent's cell,
And hear the noble Genoese of his great project tell.

A change—and now from Palos, without one parting
cheer,
For the distant west, he saileth forth, without a thought
of fear.

Again, with the eye of eager hope, he gazeth through
the night,
Till, with the day, the new found land dawns on his
dazzled sight.

He sees again a noble form come riding through the street,
Where the riches of the Old World with the New
World's treasures meet.

A rich and splendid cavalcade, the young, the fair, the
old,
Are looking with awe and wonder on the Indians and
their gold.

And, beyond, fresh regions meet his gaze, and o'er them
wide and vast
The shadows of still greater lands, is like a dial's east.

Then when fresh glories beckon on, and an angel guides
the helm,
Come the storms of a king's displeasure, and his bright
hopes overwhelm.

And he leaves the land of the thousand flowers, and the
rivers flowing wide,
And these fair and sea-girt islands that stud the broad
green tide.

Again, as of yore, a stranger, he bends at a monarch's
throne,
Unheeded by the basest there, unpitied, and alone.

Through a city's gate comes riding a broken-hearted
man,
His stripling son behind his mule, that slowly paces,
ran.

How far unlike that wretched pair, to the pompous
cavalcade
That once through Barcelona came in Indian gold
arrayed.

Now with a mighty project glowed his dullèd eye
again;
He saw a land more fair than earth—he woke, and felt
the chain.

And those glittering visions vanish now from the care-
oppressed brain,
And ebbing reason to the mind comes slowly back
with pain.

“When men the captive tortures, and his limbs in
anguish steep,
Then God on the wretch takes pity, and sends his
blessed sleep.

“Hark! to the mocking trumpets, 'tis the signal of
release;
’Tis the signal for the slave, whose axe to the pinioned
men gives peace.”

Loud came the roar of distant shout from the island
shore along ;

What means that tread of hurried feet, that cry of the
coming throng ?

“ In our sovereign’s name, unbar the door, strike off the
manacle ;

Does this galling iron fit the man who loved our Spain
so well ? ”

And the prison rags are hurried off, and clad in cloth of
gold,

’Mid the shouts of the veering multitude, he leaves the
felon’s hold.

And they wept when they saw that grey old man step
from their own loved shore,

For they felt that a spirit had left their land—gone, to
return no more.

The Indians wept as his ship’s white sail grows a speck
against the sky,

For they held him a being come to earth, sent by the
gods on high.

What velvet robes, of those cankering chains, can take
away the smart ?

What gift of golden ducats can heal a bruised heart ?

’Tis the wind that tears the thistle’s beard, but the breath
of the summer hour

Can stamp decay on the chalice lip of the richly dyed
flower.

No. III.

THE BATTLE OF TOBASCO.

[THE Battle of Tobasco was the first conflict of Cortes with the natives of the newly discovered continent. Having by this victory secured a foot-hold, and having, in perhaps unconscious imitation of Caesar, burned the few vessels which afforded him the only hope of escape, he commenced his victorious march into the interior in search of the great Mexican empire, of which he heard so much. The Aztec armies were gorgeous in their rich feather surcoats; their eagle banners, their golden helmets and breastplates, and their coronets of plumes.

“Brighter than beam the rainbow hues of light,
Or than the evening glories which the sun
Slants o’er the moving many-coloured sea.”—SOUTHEY.

’Tis the tropic spring, but the dark woods ring
With no jocund wild bird’s notes;
’Tis the savage hum of the Indian drum,
On the troubled air that floats
On Tobasco’s plain, thick as northern rain,
Or the sands on yon ocean’s beach,
With a burning gleam, the spear heads beam
As far as the eye can reach.

With many a gem flames their diadem,
Like some waving sea of flowers:
On their banners stream the hot sun’s beam,
A golden splendour showers.
From the pathless height, where their Fire-gods* might
From the mountain breathe the flame;
From where the sky wears ever a dye,
Those bright helmed chieftains came.

* The volcanos, the supposed dwelling of the Mexican fire-god.

And the fierce notes swell from the Indian shell,
The war-cry loud and wild;
To the god they prize with the diamond eyes,
They would offer the sun's fair child.*
"They hastened here from yon bright sphere,
On their blanched and woven sail:
Through the fleecy clouds the moon that shrouds
When the evening sky grew pale."

"Where the strangers dwell, is a barren hell,
No Paradise divine;
And their Sun-god gave, when they crossed the wave,
No love for his Indian shrine;
On this holy coast they value most,
The gold of the sun's own hue:
And I've seen them pore the metal o'er
As no other god they knew."

"Their simple mail has no golden scale,
No red stone sheds its light—
On their forms divine no feathers shine,
With a thousand colours bright.
From their limbs, as ours, the red blood showers,
When our stone knife cleaves the skin;
Their quivering hearts † from the hot flesh part,
When the priest's hand gropes within."

Thus did they prate, as with step elate,
Came swiftly on their van;
With bare swords grasped, and our corslets clasped
To meet the foe we ran.
In a piercing shower the arrows pour
On the shouting bands of Spain,
But Castille's proud boast will hold his post,
Though the missiles fall like rain.

* The Mexicans believed that the Spaniards were the children of the sun.

† A human heart was the offering peculiar to one of the Mexican deities.

Through our battered mail the axes fail,
To hew their bleeding way,
In vain they rush with a surging crush,
On those whom they deem their prey.
For the cannon's breath is the voice of death,
And it roars like their war god's shout;
All the wide plain o'er they backward pour,
As they fly in a scattered rout.

And the war-horse bounds like the fierce stag-hounds,
On the Indians' breaking rank,
With a cry of fear that thrills the ear,
From that piercing charge they shrank.
For the steeds to them as the waves o'erwhelm
Those monsters of the sea: *
For no javelin will pierce the skin
Of the forms of Eternity.

"Push on the pikes while the good sword strikes,
For the Indian king is down;
The cross waves high in the burning sky,
With the flag of the Spanish crown.
We'll end the fray of this plumed array,
With one charge of serried spears;
'Santiago' on, for the day is won,
Hark! how the vanguard cheers."

With a savage bound like the fierce bloodhound,
Bent to avenge the dead;
While the holy sign of a faith divine,
Waves o'er each warrior's head.
As far above, o'er the cowering dove
Stoops the falcon on his prey—
Through the wood of spears came the thunder cheers,
From Spain's bright armed array.

* This was the traditionary belief amongst the Tobascans, who, before Cortes arrived, had never seen a horse.

And the standard old that flames with gold,
Rough with the precious gem,
That was borne of yore, their chief before,
Is seized upon by them.
A Spanish shaft the blood has-quafft
Of Tobasco's dearest lord:
As he wounded lies, his heart's blood dyes
The point of Vasco's sword.

"And on, still on, with a pinion strong,
Like some sorcerer's magic bird ;
Their banner flies and seems to rise,
As if cheered by the shouts it heard.
Wield the war axe well, though the Indian shell
With the roar of the storm may vie —
Cleave the plumed head, with their own blood red
Their feathered robes we'll dye.

Think of Baza's * fight in the murk black night,
When the Moor bent low the knee ;
And forswore each spell of their prophet of hell
For the Lord of Calvary.
One charge, one shout, from the host rang out,
On the plain they stand alone ;
Let the forests ring while the mass we sing,
Ere the setting sun has flown."

* A town taken by the Spaniards from the Moors in a night
escalade.

No. IV.

THE TEARS OF CORTES.

[An old Spanish chronicler says, that Cortes was filled with grief when he looked down from the high mountains of Tacuba upon the great city of Mexico, which he was about to storm. Its rich valley, hemmed in by rocks of porphyry; its wide lakes, and below him rich groves of the cocoa and the sugar-cane, plantations of the aloe and the maize, productions of the tropics; and by his side the oak, the pine, and the cypress of Europe. The incident seems to have made a deep impression upon the minds of the rude soldiers of Cortes, not incapable of deep feeling, for some fragments of a Spanish song, written at that time, are still preserved, and suggested the following ballad :—]

FROM Tacuba gazed Cortes, on the city beneath that lay
With palace and temple gleaming bright in the sun's
fierce scorching ray,
With its thousand roofs that stretched afar, with grove
and terrace wide,
Hemmed in by the granite mountains that rise on every
side.

And the pyramids,* with their fiery light, that blaze by
night and day,
Tinting the hot and burning sky with a still more lurid
ray,
And the broad still lakes calm gleaming, like a silver
buckler bright,
Gazing up at the clouds like some spirit's eye, longing
to see the night.

* The Mexican temples were of pyramidal form, ascended by terrace; the altar was on the top, where a fire was kept constantly burning.

And each passing hue of the richest cloud, in those lakes
is treasured up,
As an Indian king heaps the varied gem in the red and
golden cup,
They seemed like the burning crater's mouth where
mountain fiends of old
Fuse the melted ore to a thousand shapes, and sport
with the changing gold.

And at his feet the dark pines grew ; like the surging of
the sea,
Through their massive boughs the mountain breeze
breathes sad and mournfully ;
The sun sinks low, the swift *piroque** no longer seeks
the gale
With their countless oars, their gilded sides, and their
broad, white, matted sail.

Like some ocean bird that rests at eve on the ocean's
throbbing breast,
And folds its great dark wings from flight, that city
sunk to rest ;
And now, one diamond-lighted star peers through the
clouded sky,
The lower sank the burning sun the brighter it shone on
high.

And the dark chief kissed his infant child, and smiled as
fathers smile,
And the mother weaves the feather robe, the princely
robe, the while.
One pious prayer to the Azteet† god, one cup to the gods
they drink ;
And then, on their gilt and plumed couch in holy sleep
they sink.

* Mexican canoe.

† The Mexicans were divided into two great races, ancient and modern, Aztec and Toltec.

Before a shrine all black with gore, a dusky form knelt
down,

Before the idol flaked with blood bent diadem and crown.
Before the god of the bleeding hearts the Indian king
was kneeling,

And thoughts of the foe he deemed divine, o'er his
troubled mind was stealing.

And he gazed on the volcan mountains, their peaks hid
with the snow

That seemed to burn in the rosy light of the sun's last
parting glow,

And he wept as he thought of the varied joys of that
wide and beauteous land,

And the broad fair realms a dying chief gave to his
feeble hand.

O'er the golden maize and the aloe's bloom flutters the
king of flowers,*

Where the fire-fly and the flame-dyed flowers light up
the trees and bowers,—

Realms, that a god he never knew is tearing from his
sway—

As now behind the mountain chain sunk down the ebb-
ing day.

Fair, happy city of the Sun, lulled like a child to rest,
Little thou thought of the coming plague that should
blast the golden west.

No dark-winged dream, with scowling eye, hovered
before thy sleep,

Thou laid'st thee down with smiles of joy, but rose, alas!
to weep.

As heedless as a sleeping babe, when the murderer o'er
him bent,

No thought of wrong, no thought of crime—no dream
of ill-intent;

* The humming-bird, so called by the Aztecs.

Yet sweeter than breath that wafted from a slumbering
infant mouth,
Came up the scent of the terrace flowers, fanned by the
gentle south.

From Tacuba gazed Cortes, not with a savage frown,
Not with the smile of a conqueror was Cortes looking
down;
'Twas not with the forest serpent's eye, nor its fixed and
cruel glare,
When he spies the helpless humming-bird, was that hero
gazing there.

Not with the glance of the fierce-eyed hawk, when he
strikes his quarry down,—
With no dark-lined sneer of cruel scorn, looked Cortes
on the town;
Not as when woodman drives through the boar the
keen and griding spear—
He gazed with no look of stern delight,—he saw it with
a tear.

His cheek flamed not as the reddened cloud, ere the
lightnings hurry down;
With the eye of a saint with pity filled, he beheld the
stately town;
In slow round drops the tears stole down his seared
and bronzed cheek,
He bowed his head in solemn thought, for he dared not
to speak.

No woman's grief that heart could feign, no tears had
Cortes known
Since as a child, a sorrowing child, he wept o'er a grave
alone,
And he grasps the hoary cypress stem—the tree of the
dark green leaf,
And he thinks of the first-shed tear-drops that gave his
heart relief.

And he turns his head from the wondering eyes of that
encircling band,
And he veiled the sorrow that marks his face with his
mailed hand ;
But he gazed again, for o'er the plain came on the hot
winds blast—
A maddened roar, which louder swells, ere the first wild
shout has past.

It seemed but now that the city slept, like a city of the
dead ;
Silent and still the temple lay, beneath the clouds all red :
'Twas fearful, but a moment since, when the blood-dyed
sun went down,
And shed its last faint mellow light on the distant
volcano's crown.

And the silent lake with that parting hue, is bright
and golden still ;
The last faint ray of sunset rests on the pine-clad hill ;
But the city is all stirring and rousing for the strife,
From each hut and palace terrace the Aztecs wake to life.

Hark ! that sound again ; 'tis the serpent*-drum, it
summons the priests around ;
Its thundering moans from yon pyramid o'er the city's
roof resound ;
Look ! from each terrace now burst forth bright, dazzling
jets of light,
And their mingled blaze with a dreadful glare, lights
the newly-fallen night.

“That ghastly fire is the priestly sign, if Cortes they
tell aright,
Of the gathering feast, when captives die with many a
horrid rite ;

* The drum of the war-god, made of serpents' skins ; its sound
could be heard for more than a mile ; it was the tocsin or storm-
bell to summon the nation.

Now the moon is up and clear, and dark against the
 reddened sky
Stands out the giant pyramid, as yon fire-fraught moun-
 tain high.

“I see the gathering multitude in the wide courts
 below,
Their upturned countless faces are lighted by that glow,
And see, great God—now Jesu’ help, O hear the deep-
 sighed prayer
That captive band that slowly mounts the lofty terrace
 there;

“Hear us, ye saints that favour Spain, sweet Mother of
 our Lord,
Now, thou, Great God of vengeance, draw thy avenging
 sword;
Hear us, O Christ, thou Son of God! in this our hour of
 need;
Kneel down, and pray St. Jago, so mercy be thy meed.

“And behind them crowd the white-robed priests, who,
 with mock and savage song,
Goad up to the roar of the thunder-drum, the pale and
 trembling throng;
Those phantoms white seem like the fiends that torture
 the souls in hell,
Where in the region of fire and ice, the maddened sin-
 ners dwell.

“High above all, like a demon’s voice, peals Guatamozin’s
 horn,
To their eager ears its voice seemed then like a cruel
 laugh of scorn;
Look, Sandoval, look, Cortes! our poor companions
 there—
All Spaniards, no Tlascalans mount up the blood-stained
 stair.

“ Ah! must we here all powerless gaze from this far-
removed height ;
Would that our arms might strike one blow against the
Indian might ;
No pain to die 'mid the shock of spears ; no pang in
parting breath ;
But thus to die like a butchered wolf—this, this indeed
is death.

“ O for one charge, one bursting charge, against this
plumed array,
In their dark serried phalanx we'd let the light of day ;
See, there they come, in pomp arrayed, look at the
fettered band
Gazing on sky and mountain, the doomed wretches
stand.

“ Better for them if mother's hand had slain them at
the birth,
Than thus to die, without mass or prayer, for the cruel
Pagan's mirth.
Great God! behold they strip them bare for the bloody
sacrifice ;
They will offer their hearts to the Aztec god before our
very eyes.

“ Look! there's Guzman there, whom Pedro saw with
a stone-axe cloven down ;
Behind in prayer kneels Perez, who won the chieftain's
crown ;
And his eye is turned on Juan, whose keen Toledo's sway,
For the second rank of spearmen dug out a bleeding
way.

“ And yonder too's Alfonzo, who saved great Cortez' life,
When he fell from the blow the Aztec gave with the
* crystal-bladed knife ;

* The Mexican swords and axes had blades of lava glass.

Then with a yell they threw o'er his neck the limb-
entangling chain,
And dragged him stunned from his dying horse o'er the
mingled heaps of slain.

"There's Sancho there, whom some deemed dead, who
saved the banner cross,
One hundred wretched Pagan lives could not redeem his
loss.
Now round the flaming altar-fires, before their idol's fane,
The wounded dance ; when they strive to rest, they
goad them on again.

"Would I were there, by Jesus' help, or yon pyramids
were here,
To teach the proudest Pagan host the power of a
Christian spear ;
Could human blood—could a dozen lives have saved
that band from death,
No one that stood on that mountain top but had yielded
up his breath."

They have fallen now ; and, bending o'er their bleeding
bodies bare,
The monsters their hearts, the war-god's prey, from their
throbbing corpses tear.
The last is dead ; and beneath the edge of the flint's
sharp-cutting knife,
Has yielded up to the God who gave, his last faint gasp
of life.

"O God! who keepeth vengeance, send thy good angel
down,
To plant on yon fane the holy cross—to tear from the
king his crown."
The rites are o'er, but the priests chant loud as the
bloody torrents flow,
With a yelling laugh, and a cruel scoff, they hurl each
corse below.

Of this horrid feast no dark king's blood can wash
away the stain,
'Till our dying day, like a branded scar, its memory
shall remain ;
Deep was the vow that Cortes breathed, as again he
gazeth down—
Not with the tear that pity sheds, but a dark and angry
frown.

The tears he shed were not sorrow's tears, no grief that
bows the head,
'Twas the bitter thought that wrung his heart of ven-
geance for the dead ;
The tears shook Cortes fiercely off from his fierce and
glaring eye,
And thrice he shook his falchion at the stars in the
pale clear sky.

“ Now, soldiers, on ! ” he shouted ; “ remember what
ye saw,
When you gave the flesh of their dusky prince to the
loathsome vulture's maw.
Banners advance ! wave high the cross against this
doomed town,
Dark from the clouds the God of Hosts in anger
looketh* down.”

* Macaulay.

THE SORROWFUL NIGHT.

[THE night on which the Spaniards retreated from Mexico, having in vain, after the death of Montezuma, endeavoured to preserve their footing in that great golden city of the west, is still called by the degenerated descendants of the first conquerors, the "Noche Triste," or "the Sorrowful Night." It was an awful shipwreck of Cortes' hopes, and one which the wonderful resources of his mind, his constancy, and his indomitable genius, could alone have retrieved. The day of vengeance came at last. What availed crystal blade against steel hauberk, or lasso against Spanish spear.

It was a day of terrible retribution—of "garments rolled in blood"—of confused sound of the battle, and the empire of Mexico fell like a Colossus—never to rise again.]

By the blazing light, of the watchfires bright, the weary
veterans slept,
And the umber'd gleam, of their ruddy beam, lit the
men who the night-watch kept.

Round the blaze they drew, that weary crew, for they'd
fought the live-long day,
And strove against sling of the Indian king, and the
might of his dark array.

For the fire and sword of the Spanish lord, had given
much cause for grief,
From many a land the flaming brand had summoned
the distant chief.

'Bove the pyramid whose peak is hid, gloomed dark
the midnight sky,
No silver light of the stars once bright, shone through
the clouds on high.

Never again on that idol fane shall blaze the idol's fire,
But the cross instead shall raise its head, as high as fair
Seville's spire.

On that fatal morn, ere came the dawn, Montezuma a
slave had died,
And save that chief, that died of grief, no friend had
Spain beside.

And day by day he pined away, but the demon left him
not,*
No heart had borne the cruel scorn, of the chiefs at his
changed lot.

Unshrived by monk to the grave he sunk, no son knelt
his couch beside,
Striving to read the Christian creed, the broken-hearted
died.

And now on his throne, in pride alone, fierce Guata-
mozin mounts,
Till he drives from the land the wounded band, the
weary hours he counts.

Nor happy Spain shall they see again, for the wide
Atlantic's coast,
And the wild storm wave, the rocks that lave, is less
fierce than the Aztec host.

"Let none of mine like the infant whine," cries Cortes
to his men,

"We risked our life, when one to five, and we'll ven-
ture it again.

"Let each as he may forget the fray, and the carking
pangs of sorrow,
Nerve each iron heart for a warrior's part, we'll cast the
die to-morrow.

* Montezuma died without any full declaration of his belief in Christianity.

“ Let despair’s black cloud, no gallant shroud, and
thoughts of the true friends slain,
Let no fear of ours, in the darkest hours, be ever known
in Spain.

“ Each soldier round must the gold be bound, let each
to his armour look,
*Botel** for retreat, says the hour is meet, who reads the
stars like a book.

“ Let each trooper shine, with the chains entwine, each
gem shall lend its ray,
Their varied light, as they glimmer bright, will guide us
on our way.

“ Let each heart be stout, for the Indian rout cannot
hear the felted heel,
Let no muttered prayer pierce the silent air, no war-cry
of Castille.

“ Take, every man, St. James for Spain, as the watch-
word of the night,
We must onward far, ere the morning star tells of the
coming light;

“ Till on the height, where the distant might of the city
lies below,
We rest at last, when the danger’s past, ere comes the
morning’s glow.”

* * * * *

In the still calm night, ere shone the light, through the
sleeping city’s waste,
The serried host, with no trumpet’s boast, o’er the
narrow causeway haste.

* An astrological trooper in the army of Cortes

So calm and clear, of the bauner'd spear, the wind lifts
not a fold,
They seem like a train of the ghosts of the slain, as
they leave the leagured hold.

Behind still nigh, 'gainst the pale blue sky, through the
dark thin veil of gloom,
Rises the wall of the palace hall, where so many found
a tomb.

And swift as they march o'er the causeway's arch, bold
Cortes leads the brave,
He bends his ear, each sound to hear, he'll save if man
can save.

All still around as in sleep profound the silent city
lay,
And still more fleet, through the last long street they
march, as comes the day.

'Tis like nature's hush, ere the lightning's rush in a lurid
summer's hour,
Ere the thunder loud, bursts through the cloud, with all
the earthquake's power.

Though night may hide, on the terrace wide, there
gazes many an eye,
That trumpet's clang, through the air that rang, was a
signal from on high.

At one blast of the shell, with its mournful swell, blazes
the vault of night,
Like the volcan's flame, the brightness came, from a
thousand springs of light.

And now with a crash, like the waves that dash on
some wild Pacific shore,
The city seems to awake from dreams, and to shout
with a monster's roar.

From the war-god's fane comes that echo again, of the
far-heard serpent drum,
From the city borne, the sound of the horn o'er the
darkened waters come.

And the dark crowds pour, with a sullen roar, as if
night had given them birth,
Their robes of white, to the Spaniards' sight, seem to
shroud no forms of earth.

A thousand canoes o'er the waters flew, though the
darkness hid their array,
But still the rear, with no thoughts of fear, kept the
millions all at bay.

Though the arrows that flew, still thicker grew, and
fierce plied the axe,
And the war storm sped, with a thunder tread, when
they charged us at our backs.

"Still we hewed a lane, paved with the slain, the saints
fight us beside,
On a charger white, in the heavens height, we saw St.
Jago ride."*

No cry of fear reached the soldier's ear, from Cortes'
Indian maid,†
In no woman's weed, on a barbed steed, in a trooper's
mail arrayed.

Now the bridge is past,‡ 'tis crossed at last, and they
tarry awhile in fear,
And there's hope for life, in this lull of strife, for the
last canal is near.

* So says old Bernal Diez, and this tradition of the church-militant was common in Spain.

† An Indian maiden, the constant attendant of Cortes, who served as his interpreter.

‡ The suburbs of Mexico were intersected with canals. Cortes lost many men by the failure of one of his portable bridges.

The weak beams fail—great God! that wail was the shout of dire despair!

In a crowded mass they strove to pass, but a chasm gapeth there.

Swift the horse fled past, with no look back cast, on their comrades left to die,

And the savage shout still ringeth out, above that fearful cry.

And still around, from the trampled ground, the Aztecs seem to rise,

Through the horrid din they drag within the foe to the sacrifice.

And the waters are dark with the painted bark, and the wretch with the cloven crown,

But the ingot chest* presses on his breast, and the red gold drags him down.

Rich robes, whose dyes with the rainbow vies, were stained with the waves' deep red,

And the waters are strewn with the breastplates hewn, and the spoils of the host that fled.

And gems that a king might long to win sink on the drowned dead,

And the waters' gloom, like a gorgeous tomb, grows dark above his head.

Like a vulture flew the swift canoe to bear away the dying;†

Through the fire-lit air comes the shriek and prayer to the cowards that were flying.

* Many Spanish soldiers were drowned from the weight of the treasure they strove to save when the bridge broke.

† The Mexicans carried off the wounded and the drowning to sacrifice them at their temples that shone in sight.

And the barbed reed stings the Spanish steed, and pierces
brain and marrow ;
Through plated mail, through bright steel scale, drives
fast the Indian arrow.

From their temple's hall, to their gods they call, to aid
them in the fray ;
On the mangled slain, on the missiles' rain, beams forth
the golden day ;

And its rays shone then on drowning men, and many a
dying face,
On gashed form, with limbs still warm, that strewed the
ghastly place ;

And the breeze of day, as sweet as May, in the spring-
time of the year,
Fanned the pale cheek of the soldier weak, who hails
it with a cheer.

On that morning gale came the mourners' wail, and the
sound of splashing oars ;
On the calm cool air came shriek and prayer, though
still the battle roars.

Still pealed the yell as the war-club fell, 'mid the cries
of the day of doom ;
The women groan as they mourn alone in horror's
deepest gloom.

Then through the din rode Cortes in, though his horse's
housings o'er,
And his armour gleams through the dark red streams
that onward fiercer pour.

'Twas armour stout that could then keep out the sharp
stone of the sling,
That could ward the dart that to the heart flew on the
restless wing.

As high as your breast swam the floating chest, and the
robes that shone with gold,
And gems and ore that rude hands tore from the Indian
monarch's hold;

And feathers bright as the ruby's light pillowed the slain
man's head,
And royal robes o'er-bedabbled with gore were wrapped
round the dead.

Still the causeway o'er the cannons pour their flames
that onward flew;
It breaks the rank and it rends the plank of the warriors'
black canoe.

In the morning light, far as scans the sight, o'er the
darkly crowded dyke,
The iron rain still sweeps the plain, still charge they
with the pike.

The "sun's own child,"* in frenzy wild, leaps the wave
at a single bound,
Further than deer, though winged by fear, e'er leapt
from sharp-fanged hound.

Though the human wave a war-shout gave, as they
rushed on the broken mass,
Like a man who breasts the foam-wave's crests, bold
Cortes holds the pass.

Then slowly back on the bloody track, o'er the cause-
way's wide stones red,
To palace and hall of their capital they fly to mourn
their dead.

* Alvarado, called "the child of the sun" by the Mexicans, using his spear like a hunting pole, cleared the floating wreck at a bound, and reached his flying comrades. The spot is still shown to the traveller.

* * * * *

From the village height, ere the sun set bright, Cortes
beholds his band;

With no trumpet's note, no banners float, they reach
the friendly land.

All travel-worn, with proud crest torn, with no gallant
army's pride,

With no dancing plume to hide their gloom,—blood
dripped from their wounded side.

The salt ooze drained from their armour, stained with
the blood of friend and foe;

With bowed head they mourn the dead,—weary they
march, and slow.

But many a face that once had place, Cortes beholds not
there:

“Where do they ride I fought beside? Where are the
absent? Where?”

In his robe's thick fold, that warrior bold, whose heart
they deemed of stone,

Hid his bended head as he heard their tread: he mourn-
eth there alone.

Through his blood-stained hand, on the hot dry sand,
the warm tears silent fall,

For the dead in vain, o'er the wide-spread plain, sounds
the trumpet's shrill recal.

With the mournful plaint of that echo faint, that up to
heaven goes,

On the sighing gale came back the wail, blent with the
shout of foes.

No. VI.

THE MURDER OF PIZARRO.

[This stern adventurer possessed all the courage of Cortes, without any of his milder virtues. His bravery passed into ferocity; he was avaricious, coarse-minded, and cruel. Less decisive than his greater predecessor, and having a more peaceful people to subdue, he would have perhaps failed amongst the warlike nations of Mexico. Pizarro was assassinated in a chamber of his own palace at Lima, a city of his own erection, when in the plenitude of his power, by a band of Chili men, needy adventurers, friends of his former companion in arms, but then rival, Almagro, whose rebellion he had suppressed, but whom he had disdained to punish more severely. Uneducated, cruel, and despotic, he died regretted by none; a sword used by God and thrown aside. In the moment of death, he showed that intense and gloomy superstition which distinguishes the Spaniards, blended with much of the ancient hero. Exclaiming, "Jesu!" he traced a cross upon the floor with the blood that welled fast from his own life-streams, and was stooping to kiss it, when a blow, more deadly than its fellows, severed soul from body.]

IN great Lama's streets stood the Chili men, careworn,
with heads hung down,
As the viceroy* in his pride of state, came riding
through the town;
More fit for war's fierce tourney was that scarred and
bronzed face,
Than for those mummings of a king, and courtiers'
forced grimace.

He heeds no shout that hails him, no loud applauding
cry,
Careless of that approving crowd, he spurs him proudly
by;

* Pizarro.

With a careless scorn he greets their bows, for his
palace gate is nigh.

One frown he gave to that starving crew, then turned
away his eye.

And rich was Pizarro's velvet cloak, and rich his chain
of gold,

That falls upon his doublet and its dark sable fold ;

A cruel taunt is graven above his cold stern brow,

"For the men of Chili," is that badge,* that with the
bright stones glow.

To the cheerful sound of the Indian horn, through the
palace gates thrown wide,

Sweep in the viceroy's retinue in their rich and lustrous
pride ;

But he who tore from the Inca's head the wreath he
called a crown,

Cares not for the turning blind worm, that his arm'd
heel tramples down.

The Indian slave that passes by thinks of the age of old,
When the Incas ruled the sun's fair land, in the glorious
days of old ;

But far unlike those rich clad men, was that famine
pinched band,

No pearls, no gems, could rebels glean from the hasty
conquered land.

Poor wave-worn planks of a gallant ship, the bravest
bark of Spain,

That the sea of death hath swallowed up and yielded
not again ;

"No barbed spear, no Indian blade, his princely heart
clove through—

They strangled him in a dungeon,† as you might a cursed
Jew."

* He set this inscription in his bonnet.

† Almagro was put to death in prison, but not by Pizarro's
orders.

Without priestly shrive, that's not denied e'en to a
thievish Moor,
They slew him ere the sunset, as you'd stab a captive
boor;
And they heaved a groan, that starving crew, when they
thought of their murdered chief,
But hate soon followed sorrow, and chased the rising
grief.

And they drew their swords and waved them, in the hot
burning sky,
And fiercer grew their muttered words, and louder grew
their cry:
"Shame, that a wretched swineherd's* son should lord
it o'er Peru—
Shame, that a bravo has the fame Almagro never
knew."

"The one eyed chief,† Pizarro's lord, was the bravest of
us all,
He better loved to stem the war, than rob the Indian's
hall;
'Twas his broad gold piece, his well filled pouch, that
gave Peru to Spain,
'Twas he that planted Jesu's Cross upon the Sun-god's
fane.

"Shame! that our backs should bear the blow from a
tyrant's mailed hand,
Shame! that a murderer's mailed foot should spurn a
starving band;
Though now he's decked with the yellow pearls, brought
from the island coast,
We are of as pure and proud a blood as such as he can
boast.

* Pizarro was of very low birth, the son of a camp-sutler.

† Almagro.

“Alas! that Lama’s children should die when food is
near,
Or pine away when the revel’s shout rings loudly in
our ear;
Woe’s me for the young Almagro, so fit to grace a
throne,
Too young to sink to a peasant’s grave, unpitied and
alone.”

Then up and spoke fierce Reda, and he spoke with a
savage frown,
“In God and the blessed Virgin’s name, let’s cleave the
villain down;
Wait for no white flag* waving, for mass or holy
tide,
But slay him now in the bloom of sin, in the hour of
his fullest pride.

“Who’ll wail here like a maiden, if his heart be firm
and bold?
Who’ll starve in the sight of plenty—poor when the
flood runs gold?
I swear by hell’s red prison, who will not follow me,
I’ll stab him as a craven in this hour of jeopardy.”

Reda was one, who half a life had shared Almagro’s
pains,
To save his son he would have shed the life-blood from
his veins;
“Better a blow from headsman’s axe, than life to ebb
away,
Better a blow from spear or sword than dying day by day.

“We can but die, my comrades, ’tis best to wreak our
hate,
For come what may, be fortune worst, we can but meet
our fate;”

* The conspirator’s preconcerted signal.

Then with the cry of the famished wolf, with a mad-
man's yelling shout,
With flashing blade and blazing torch grim Reda
rushes out.

"Now, up, ye men of Chili, 'tis the coward sitteth still,
Throw open now the barred door and follow me
who will;
Long live the son of the murdered man, the gallant and
the brave,
And a shroud for the grey old swineherd, let him reign
within the grave.

"A merry laugh shall fill the air, and the sound of joy
shall ring,
When the viceroy, on the gibbet tree, like a strangled
thief shall swing;
And he who jeered at starving men shall feed the vul-
ture foul,
He shall give the bird what he grudged to man, and
God receive his soul."

Loud rang the shout through Lama, none cared the cry
to hear,
For love had none for the iron chief, no love, but much
of fear;
They hurry on through the broad paved square—alas!
'twere now too late,
One brave man, 'gainst a thousand foes, might have
kept that palace gate.

Now, flying to Pizarro, comes a varlet faint for breath,
"Arm! arm! my lord, for the Chili men are banded for
thy death."

"How pale his cheek!" cried the dauntless one, as he
drained his cup of wine,

"'Tis some fool's dull tale—who dreams of fear, thou
little page of mine!"

"I've heard of late, but heeded not, the rebels plotting
tricks,
I deemed them but a villain's hopes told o'er a crucifix."
In rushed a second serving man, still whiter was his
cheek,
Chained was his tongue with very-fear—"Speak, drunken
varlet, speak!"

Dumb stood he there, his gaze was wild, and fixed was
his face,
"Arm, good my lord, arm, nobles all, the traitors come
apace;"
And he gazes at the chamber portal, and draws his
ready sword,
And points with his finger to the page to arm their
aged lord.

Near came the cries, and nearer. "Search every corner
out!"
Through the wide bare rooms, in eager haste, rush in
the furious rout;
And the jest that the idle laughter told, sinks to a
whisper faint;
The talk of wine and lady's love, to prayer to Lima's
saint.

Aghast look Pizarro's feasting friends, and in terror
and in dismay
They left the half-drained wine-cup, and hurried them
away.
"Bar the door, good Garcia, bar out the rogues' array,
Like two chafed lions in our den, we'll keep the knaves
at bay."

Too late—one heart blood drinking thrust, one helmet
cleaving blow,
And they tumble the bleeding body to the marble hall
below.

They rush up stairs with pike and sword, shouting such
words of scorn
As had greeted their ears from the viceroy's mouth, ay!
but that very morn.

But their shout of joy is turned to rage, for three men
keep the door,
They stood like the eager hunters that would spear the
foaming boar.
Then Pizarro rushed to aid the guard, in their face his
helm he hurled:
"What, ho!" he cried, "ye stabbers, scum of the new-
found world."

Then by his side old Sanchez fell, but no time was that
to weep;
No time for thoughts of anguish, no place for sorrow deep.
But still was left fair Pedro, the youngest of the three;
A thrust from the blade of a partisan has brought him
to his knee.

And the blood that welled from Sanchez' wound fell on
the dying child;
Then fierceglared old Pizarro, and his fiery eye glared wild,
And his sword cleaved helm and corselet, and his sword
cleaved mail and targe—
In vain on his breast the arrows splint, in vain the
rebels charge.

And bravely fought Pizarro, though his limbs were stiff
with age,
As well as when in the pride of years he fought by the
fair Adage.*
And he struggled on, that grey haired man, though the
blows fell thick as rain,
As well as he did when he bore the cross on Cuzco's
golden plain.

* Pizarro served in Italy in his youth.

“Down with the savage,” Reda cries, “shall a grey-beard
drive us off?
Oh! that, indeed, for the Chili men, were a sharp and
biting scoff.”
Then, with a howl of baffled rage, he grasps Alverrez
round,
And hurls him at Pizarro, and brings him to the
ground.

Like a stone from the sling of a peasant boy, half-
stunned, Alverrez flies,
In vain, Pizarro strikes him down; in vain, the rebel
dies.
“He dies too late,” cries Reda, and drives through his
heart the sword,
Ere Pizarro sank a dozen blades drank the life-blood of
their lord.

“Jesu,” he groans, and makes a cross on the blood be-
dabbled floor;
He bends to kiss the holy sign—one groan, and all is
o’er.
“Shout, for the tyrant’s fallen—Pizarro, the lord, is dead,
And now the viceroy’s jewelled badge shall deck
Almagro’s head.”

They sheath their swords, but ere they part, one glance
they give again
At the body of him who’s fallen, at the mighty one
they’ve slain.
And now the robbers pillage the casket and the shrine,
And bear away the Inca’s gold from many a treasure
mine.

And now the drum and the trumpets blow, to the sound
of jest and song,
In a rich and gorgeous cavalcade Almagro rides along.

* * * * *

By the dim torch light the weeping wife, the faithful
Indian slave,
Lowers the stiff and mangled body into an humble
grave.

And none shed tears of sorrow, none bent the reverent
head—
None prayed, “May God assoile him”—none mourned
for the dead.

The only one from whose aching eyes the frequent tear-
drops rain,
Was an Indian slave, who only knew, to curse, the name
of Spain.

No. VII.

THE DEATH OF OLD CARBAJAL.

[FRANCISCO DE CARBAJAL, a brave but cruel old warrior, 84 years of age, was executed at the same time with Gonzalo Pizarro, with whom he had conspired to change Peru from a viceroyalty to a monarchy independent of Spain. In the decline of their fortunes this stern, iron-hearted man, said nothing, but hummed the words of a Spanish song:—

“The wind blows the hairs off my head, mother.”

When they told him of his doom, he said, calmly, “Basta matar”—“They can but kill me.” In prison he bantered those who came to mock at the Samson in bonds. To a cavalier, who offered him assistance, he replied, “What service can you do me? Nothing is of use, if you can’t set me free. If I spared your life, as you say, I did it because I thought it not worth taking.” To the priests who came to absolve his soul, blackened and encrusted with sin, he said, “I have nothing on my conscience but a debt of half a real to a shopkeeper of Seville.” He was drawn to the scaffold in a basket drawn by mules. As they forced his pinioned body in, he exclaimed, “Cradles for the young and cradles for the old!” When the priest implored him to repeat the “Ave Maria and Pater noster,” he merely repeated the words, “Ave Maria, Pater noster.” “He died,” says Prescott, “with a scoff on his lips.” Of such metal were the conquerors of Peru.]

GASCA the brave! the warrior priest!* has brought back
on this happy day
The golden region of Peru to the old Castilian sway.

With unshivered blade, unsplintered lance, they fled
before our host,
In spite of Carbajal’s demon† aid, and the proud Gonzalo’s boast;

* Gasca, a priest, a man of great courage and sagacity, put down this formidable rebellion.

† The soldiers believed that Carbajal had a familiar.

In spite of the son of the iron chief, the churl with the
gilded helm,
The brave old chief that, strong in age, conquered this
broad fair realm.

Not greater was proud Cortes, who seven kings slew, I
ween,
Than he who tore Peru's great chief from his jewelled
palanquin.

The bold stern monarch swineherd, no coward heart had
he;
Little he thought that the son he left a traitor knave
would be.

And the world's great king,* who rais'd that chief from
the dust of his native land,
Will brand his name as he tearerth now the sceptre from
his hand.

The proud Pizarro that yesterday was held of noble
birth,
Shall wake on the dismal morrow again to till the earth.

For great is the might of the holy king who wears the
Spanish crown;
On his broad and fair dominions the sun goes never
down.

In his treasure cells, from this glorious world Columbus
gave to Spain,
The silver and gold, like a mighty sea, comes pouring
in amain.

O puissant is the emperor, whose great and trusty lance
Hurled from the high war-saddle the monarch knight of
France.

* Charles V.

Such wretched fate seize those who plot against the
imperial line ;
Such fate as Carbajal shall know ere the sun has ceased
to shine.

For Carbajal, the grey-beard knight, whom the Indian
knoweth well,
Is served by an evil spirit—a demon sent from hell.

Pizarro is that traitor bold, who longed a king to be,
And thought that Peru was far from Spain, and girdled
by the sea.

He longed to mount the Indian throne ; with the
fringe* his head he decked ;
Of Spanish lance and arquebus the madman little recked.

And near him ever Carbajal rode, when he led the van-
guard on,
With the dinted helm and the battered arms, a coal-
black steed upon.

And the scarred old Flemish veterans, who feared no
mortal birth,
Say that the steed† that no bolt could pierce was no
creature of this earth.

'Twas Carbajal, on Chupa's plains, chased the rebel
knaves ; as fast
They fled, as flies the thistle-beard before the Pampa's
blast.

With no corselet on, with his beaver up, he moved amid
the strife—
What steel can wound, what fire can sear, the man with
a charmed life ?

* The Inca's crown, a rich turban fringed with scarlet.

† Carbajal, like Clavers, whom he somewhat resembled, was
thought invulnerable.

On that bloody day he stood unmoved, firm as the agate
rock,

When Almagro's knights dashed on our spears with the
earthquake's jarring shock.

When he charged their ranks thirteen good men from
their saddles down he threw;

Ah ! well the men of Chili that dreadful hour may rue.

And he chased the murderer viceroy o'er mountains
veined with gold,

Such havoc he made as a grim wolf does in the wattled
fold.

Not with the bloodhound's fiery eye, but jesting with
his men,

As when in Potosi's* mines he tore the silver from its
den.

He slays them as they rest by night, in their camp on
the scorched ground;

With armed men he peopled the trees, dark Pulto's
mountain round:

And the demons of golden Andes laughed, as they
might, to see

How like proud man, who rules the earth, to a devil in
hell may be.

Silent and sad Pizarro rode, and hid his face the
while—

“No tales tell the dead,” said Carbajal, with a grim and
cruel smile.

And Quito saw Carbajal, for he loved not peace nor rest;
When Puelles buried his poniard deep in the wounded
viceroy's breast.

* Carbajal had land and mines in the rich district of Potosi.

When, 'mid the mingling shouts of war, the thousand
groans and cheers,
The sword swept fast, the axe hewed on, amid the wood
of spears.

They tore the dead man's long grey hair, and wore it
for a plume,
To show that the cruel viceroy had gone to a bloody
tomb.

But Carbajal was far away, far over the steep sierra,
With untiring foot, athirst for blood, he followed the
chief Albera.

Just as the giant condor the helpless lambs pursue,
So over steep and chasm the fierce Carbajal flew :

And he was there, at Cuzco, when the copper arms were
beaming ;
When high in the sky, o'er spear and axe, the rainbow*
banner's gleaming.

Like a wall of fire, round the towers, blazed their red
watch-fires bright ;
Far on the plain, in an endless wave, thick as starst
on a summer night.

When they girt the town at burning noon, like some
broad crystal stream,
On the copper mail and sharp glass blade, shone red the
hot sunbeam.

And from the sky, by night and day, the flaming
arrows fly,
When waves of fire went surging up to the smoke be-
clouded sky.

* The national standard of Peru, borne generally by the heir
apparent.

† The expression of a Spaniard who saw the siege of Cuzco by
the Peruvians.

And through the dark, sad face of night, the wreathing
smoke clouds flew,
Like vapour of costly sacrifice to the Sun-god of Peru.

And he was there when with cavalcade slow moving
o'er the plain,
The Inca came to the Indian town,* but ne'er returned
again.

When on they came, to the sound of drum, and savage
minstrelsy,
And rolled like the broad deep gathering floods of
some dark turbid sea.

And he had seen the Aztec king lie chained at Cortes' feet ;
And he had seen the plumed ranks with the mailed
Spaniards meet.

Alas! that the scoff, and jeering mock, should stain so
brave a name—
Should brand the arms of the cavalier—should sully all
his fame.

But, in evil day, he made a prince of one of lowly birth ;
And tore down Spain's proud blazoned flag, and trod it
to the earth.

And sought to raise Pizarro's brood to the fallen Inca's
throne,
As if, in this new and glorious world, a rebel could
reign alone.

And they thought of the perjured oath they'd sworn,
the penalty they knew ;
'Twas conscience half unarmed the hearts of the rebels
of Peru.

* An allusion to the capture of the proud Atahualpa, by
Pizarro.

"We'll strike them down," Pizarro cried, "I swear by
my knightly word,
Just as the monster vulture does the painted humming
bird."

(The humming bird, that fairy thing, the creature of an
hour,
That seems in the air to float along like a bright and
living flower.)

O! who can count the fallen on wide Narina's plain?
O! who can count the rebel knights that lie amid the
slain?
As thick as on the thrashing floor in autumn lies the
grain.

What leader's that whose right arm cleaves the rolling
waves of fight?
'Tis Carbajal, the first who dared to charge us on the
right.

Unlit by star, he followed on, till a forest shelter
gave,
For, on his track Corteno came, the bravest of the brave.

Though clouds had hid Pizarro's star, and quenched its
sparkling ray,
Carbajal mock'd the parting light, and curs'd the fall
of day.

As he spurred through the stream that rippling flowed
through a wild and rocky glen;
His jaded steed fell 'neath his load—we sprang upon
him then.

As the peasant on a wily fox who long has 'scaped his
art,
We bound that bleeding warrior with the unyielding
heart.

When his sword-blade broke, he still fought on with the
 fragment of the hilt,
 But his hands weighed down by the heavy load of sin
 and hidden guilt.

Still in his dungeon paces he, his eye still glares with
 rage;
 He seems like a new caught ocelot,* as he shakes his
 firm-barred cage.

Now still awhile in gloomy thought, then tries the
 prison's bars,
 Then, with a grim and horrid smile, points to his white-
 seamed scars.

He's proud of those tracks of purple wounds, received
 in the fight,
 As a trooper of his golden spurs, or the jewelled star
 of knight.

And he talks of the fight at Pavia, when Ravenna's
 plain was red,
 And Francis yielded† up his sword, amid the piles of
 dead.

When France' bold sons, with thrust and blow, amid
 the battle gloom,
 Hewed out, 'mid heaps of dying, a deep and bloody
 tomb.

And he told us of Cordova, and the brave chief
 Navarrow,
 And such scenes of bygone glory as none again shall
 know.

* The South American panther.

† Carbajal served in Italy, was at the sack of Rome, and afterwards fought under the "Great Captain," Gonzalez de Cordova.

He told us of the Pagan's deeds, when the might of the
Spanish crown
Passed o'er the smoking frontier, to storm the Moorish
town

Of that great and puissant emperor, who loved the fair
Castille,
And said its knights had the longest spears, and the
surest biting steel.

How he longed that Gasca had been there, when they
sacked the seven-hilled Rome,
And scared the red-capped cardinals, beneath the giant
dome.

And he laughed as shrill as a fiend might laugh, when
he thought of the bloody day,
When he slew the rich fat herd of monks, as a wolf the
sheep would slay.

Then Pizarro his king he bade adieu, but shed no
woman's tear,
What cared for death an iron heart, that never knew a
fear.

But fierce was the curse he muttered, loud was the curse
and deep,
At the trembling fool that held the axe, who could not
choose but weep.

Grim did the grey-beard warrior look, and ghastly was
his frown,
As he kneeled there, to bide the blow, and cursed the
shaven crown.

And he pushed aside the holy priest, that held a cross
on high,
And he flung ten-ducats to the crowd, who hail him
with a cry.

They gave him still all-fettered, his well-known battle-
brand,
He broke it in three shivers, with a blow of his pinioned
hand.

And he cried, "There's no Peruvian, noble enough or
brave,
To use thee as thou shouldst be used, when I am in the
grave."

One look of hate at the setting sun, one curse of hatred
deep,
And he bent him down, as he shouted forth, "Death is
eternal sleep."

With fixed eye, with no holy sign, he met the deadly
blow,
With a dull faint sound, the knight's grey head, rolls
on the sand below.

No. VIII.

THE PROCESSION OF THE DEAD.

["WHEN an Inca died," says Prescott, "or, as the Peruvians expressed it, 'was called home to the mansions of his father, the sun,' his body was embalmed, and placed with those of his ancestors in the great temple of the sun at Cuzco : there, clad in their royal robes, they sat in chairs of gold, the queens on one side and the kings on the other ; their heads bent downwards, and their hands crossed on their bosoms. Several of these royal mummies, hidden by the Peruvians at the conquest, were found by a Spanish corregidor : they were perfect as life, without so much as a hair or an eyebrow wanting. As they were carried through the streets of Lima, decently covered with a mantle, the Indians threw themselves on their knees in sign of reverence, with many tears and groans, and were still more touched when they beheld some of the Spaniards doffing their hats in token of respect to departed royalty."]

WHAT chiefs are those in Lima's streets, on Spanish
shoulders borne,
Such jewelled robes and costly plumes by the Incas
once were worn,

There's no low chant of death
To show that a crowned conqueror has yielded up his
breath.

Such scarlet fringe was the diadem that decked the
royal head,

But, save in the midnight dream, came never back the dead.

There's trampling of feet,
But no measured beat of muffled drum, no chanting in
the street.

Long since, the rainbow banner faded before the storm,
Not with the sun of other days grows now the cold
earth warm ;

The god so good, so mild,
Looks down with a frown of anger on his once favoured
child.

And many a chief long passed away, whose splendour
once was bright,
Is feasting now with the spirit kings in the realms of
purer light ;

There's gone to a better clime
Many a bright-plumed emperor who ruled of olden
time.

Know you great Cuzco's temple, where, with unceasing
ray,
Blazed forth in a flood of ceaseless light, the orb* of the
god of day,

And the gem-encrusted wall
Shone with a light as rich, as fair, as the Inca's palace
hall.

Where in the East,—Jesus, Great God† 'mid the herald
clouds appears—
Then shone with a matchless radiancy the sun's bright,
golden tears;‡

Alas! that the shining ore
Should have lured the cruel Spaniards to this unhappy
shore.

And the rainbow's arch§ that spanned the wall, bright
with the coloured stone,
With a rich and varied brilliancy, of a thousand
colours shone,

On the golden cornice bright,
They glared, though clouds might veil the day, those
triple showers of light.

* The walls of the temple were adorned with a golden sun and a silver moon; the former of these facing the east to catch the first dawn.

† The temple was afterwards turned into a cathedral.

‡ The Peruvians called gold the tears of the sun.

§ In the temple at Cuzco, there were chapels dedicated to the moon, the sister of the sun, and to the stars and rainbow her attendants.

And light blazed back on lustrous light, while with a
softer gleam

The moon, embossed in silver, shone with her pallid
beam;

And when arose the dawn,
The priests hailed with a gladsome shout the coming of
the morn.

And as the morning incense curled up into the air,
I've seen the holy Incas seated like monarchs there;

The priest through the temple crept,
As if his low, deep-chanted hymn could rouse the
kings who slept.

Like some great silent senate, sat the bright crowned
dead;

Dark was their cheek, as it was in life, and bowed was
their head;

Still calm, as if alone,
Sat Peru's once mighty monarchs, each on his golden
throne.

And the wind that rustled the mantle's fold, like the
voice of one unseen,

On the silence of a mournful thought that stealeth in
between,

Like music from without,
From Cuzco's gardens came the gushing fountain's
laughing shout.

You might have deemed that life was there ruled over
by the mind,

When the long green plume* on each corpse-king's head
was shaken by the wind;

* The Peruvian badge of royalty—the feathers of a rare bird
found in the Andes, and considered sacrilege to kill. Probably
now as extinct as the Dodo.

Yes, those are the by-gone Incas, they bear them to
their rest,
Beneath the earth, in a small dark cave of the city of
the West;
Such is the common doom,
Though for awhile the corpse embalmed be saved from
the tomb.

Yon is the great Yupanqui, the bright sun's greatest
child,
Who bore the Rainbow banner far into Chili's wild;
O'er the Ande's peaks he swept,
Like a panther on his jungle prey upon the foe he
leapt.

Snowy with age is the monarch's hair, to my eye it
seemeth now
As if the weight of some heavy care still brooded on
his brow,
And seated by his side
Is an Inca, whose dark raven hair tells still of youth
and pride.

And there is his sire Huyana, who conquered Quito's
king,
Who made the name of great Peru o'er the distant
mountains ring,
Ere proud and cruel Spain
With the lust of gold and the thirst for blood ravaged the
fertile plain.

How sunken now their glory, when son and father
meet,
Gazed at by the passing stranger, and borne through
Lima's street
To the measured tread of multitudes,
To their resting-place, the lonely grave, pass on the
royal dead.

Not at the head of armies, as once in the days of old,
In a gorgeous litter, flaming with costly gems and gold,
 Upon the flying foes,
Like the sun in its fairest splendour, the monarch's
litter goes.

With sighs and bitter weeping, and reverential sign,
The Indians greet, for the last sad time, those hallowed
forms divine;

 And as the bearers nearer drew
Themselves, like prostrate worshippers, before the dead
they threw.

Their hard hearts touched with pity, the Spaniards bow
the head,
As on their way to their resting-place, pass by the royal
dead;

 The setting sun above,
Smiled on the sad procession with the last fond smile of
love.

No. IX.

THE DESCENT OF THE VOLCANO.

[ONE of the most chivalrous acts of heroism perhaps ever performed by man, was the descent of Francisco Montano, a noble cavalier in the army of Cortes, into the crater of the great volcano, *Topocatepall*, which towers above the chain of snow-covered mountains that separate Mexico from Puebla. Lowered in a basket 400 feet down the ghastly depths of the flaming abyss, he gathered sulphur sufficient to manufacture a supply of powder for the use of Cortes' army. What could resist men who made even the most fearful of nature's prodigies thus supply their wants?]

THE Spanish host from Cholula came at the midnight
hour,
From where o'er the plain of the five broad lakes the
snowy volcans* tower;
And in the court of the temple, stretched on the paved
ground,
Lay groups of friendly Tlasecalans the blazing watch-fires
round;
And the jests flew fast, and the biting scoff, and the
burst of the Indian song,
And many a tale the Spaniards told, to speed the night
along.

They talked of the fight at Cholula, when, like the
trembling hare,
The caeique fell, by an unknown hand, caught in the
hunter's snare;
When through the clouds of sulphurous smoke, that
friend and foe had hid,
Cortes sprang up the blazing stairs of the giant pyra-
mid;

* The Spanish name for volcanos.

And when with a shout of holy joy they reared the
blessed rood,
On the spot where the blood-stained idol in scorn of
God had stood.

And they praised the chief * whose daring had hurled
the blazing brand,
And burnt the fleet to ashes, as they leapt upon the
strand;
And they mocked the senseless humming-bird that to
its flower-built nest
Bade the blood-bestained vulture as a great and favoured
guest.
But the wildest tale they heard that night was one
Montano told,
Just at the dawn of morning, when the night damp's
falling cold.

"'Twas on the eve of Cholula that Cortes bade me
seek
For sulphur in the crater of the volcan's snowy peak,
Where the Indians think, in a deep abyss, lies an en-
trance to hell;
For they say in the copper mountains† the howling
spirits dwell;
And with Pedro, and with Guzman, long ere the dawn
of day,
Through the dark pine forest toiling, we slowly made
our way;

"Through woods that hung with Indian fruits, past tracts
of golden maize,
Till moss and short thick yellow grass alone met
anxious gaze;
And soon we left beneath our feet of man all pleasant
trace;
Nothing but stunted bushes grew in that dreary place;

* Cortes.

† The Indian name of the Cordilleras.

And all around is mountain, like some great frozen
sea

Upheaved in stormy billows,—boundless they seemed
to be.

“ But the icy wind, whose snowy blast poured down the
sleet and hail,

Pierced chill through cotton doublet,* and through the
metal mail.

Long since the sunny land of flowers, and the hot
clime, we lost,—

Now slowly dawned before us the land of eternal frost ;
And still on helm the sleet and snow the mountain
spirit hurled,

While the forest, with its spreading shade, seemed to
hide us from the world ;

“ And before us rose the mountain top, where gleams
the last sun’s ray,—

Strange awful spot from whence to see the dawning of
the day.

From such a peak gazed Jesus, with Satan by his side,
O’er city, isle and continent, and all the great world’s
pride.

On such a mount in glory stood He who from heaven
came,

When there shone a light in the sky above, and angels
breathed His name.

“ On such a mount the prophet† stood when he looked
to south and north,

And gazing on the crowded tents he poured his blessing
forth.

And above us lie the mountains, the kings of the granite
chain,

Who, with the fiery volcans, are guardians of the plain,

* Cortes made his soldiers adopt the thick padded cotton
cuirasses of the Indians, that would resist a sword cut.

† Balaam.

And the cold and trembling Indians who clung to
 Guzman's side,
 Said that the snowy mountain* was the granite
 monster's bride;

"Great porphyry pillars of the world, that join the
 earth and sky,
 In rival pride of greatness,—some Titan reared them
 high.
 And now we brace us to the task, and mount the flaming
 tower,
 So bare the track, no yellow bee hums o'er the aloë's
 flower.
 And the splintered crags of porphyry are seared and
 thunder-rent,
 O'er chasms deep as a mountain, the foaming torrents
 went.

"On the blasted peak the snow-wreath lies, untouched
 by the fierce sun's ray,
 Unmelted, save where o'er the ice the lava burns a
 way.
 Sweet is the night-dew's fragrance on the wide-spread
 Aztec plain,
 To the scorching showers of ashes, and the lava's fiery
 rain.
 Beneath our feet the lightning for itself a passage
 wore,
 And the trembling throb of the earthquake gave out
 a sullen roar;

"And the thunder, like the mountain's voice, howled
 with an echo deep,
 As if to rouse the demons from their centuries of
 sleep.

* The Mexicans believed that the two volcanoes were petrified
 giants.

Then the Indians swore by their cursed gods, and by
the volcan's fire,
That though we turned and slew them, they would not
mount up higher.
'None but a madman,' muttered they, 'would thus defile
the shrine,
Where the fire-god, clothed in his pomp, shows like a
king divine.'

"So we left the shivering wretches there, and through
the lava sand,
Crept up, by dint of eager foot, and ever grasping hand.
And the lava lay a molten sea, congealed by frozen air.
In a thousand forms of wonder ; its course was stayed
there ;
And now before our aching sight lay a wide and icy
tract,
Bright seemed the lustre of its glare beside the lava
black.

"And above us gaped the chasin, whose depth no eye
could trace,
And above us shone the ceaseless fire, whose blaze lit
each paled face ;
And the Indians deemed us sorcerers, whose toil and
livelong strife
Would tear from the hostile demon, eternity of life.
And rarer still and colder grew the chill mountain air,
Scarce can the overburdened breast the weight of the
doublet bear.*

"Before us, like a great dark lake, the volcan's crater
lay,
Its lava waves were seething with a dull and ruddy
ray ;

* Those who have ascended high mountains may remember
the difficulty of breathing and the sense of oppression, and to a
superstitious Spaniard this might have seemed supernatural.

In a ceaseless stream, in a burning flood, in a never-
 ending glow,
 The spark-lit smoke is rising, and the lava torrents flow ;
 And high on that untrod mountain's top, on that high
 and scathed cone,
 Wrapped in a black and lurid cloud a spirit sits alone.

“ Blind with the glare, and almost scorched by the crater's
 torrid breath,
 We offered a prayer to the God of peace, bethinking us
 of death ;
 But even there, in that desert wild, and on that lofty peak,
 God with an eye of pity looked down upon the weak ;
 He heard,—for the wind, with a scornful blast, drove
 the lava river back,
 And left to the smoking crater's mouth a bare and
 withered track.

“ Then quick again, ere that flood should come, we
 lowered the basket down.
 Few would have ventured footstep there,—no ! not to
 win a crown.
 Hung over hot boiling tide of fire, and fusing wave
 of gold,
 I sought the sulphur drops that clung to the side of the
 demon hold ;
 Like serpents that strive to reach a bird, the veins of
 metal twined
 On the calcined sides of that furnace, cracked with the
 chilling wind.

“ Fierce breathed the flame, near rolled its tide,—I
 crossed my pallid brow
 As I felt of the ebbing tide of fire the hot returning
 glow.
 I swooned when I reached the crater's brink, safe from
 that burning wave,
 And saw fond faces gaze on me as risen from the grave ;

“And my silent heart the great God praised, though I
had not strength to speak,
As again I felt the mountain breeze upon my heated
cheek.
And I kissed the cross-hilt of my sword, upon the
mountain side,
As back my load to the cheering camp I bore with a
victor's pride.”

•

PART II.

LAYS AND LEGENDS.



MISCELLANEOUS BALLADS, TRANSLATIONS,
AND OCCASIONAL POEMS.

THE DIVER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER.

“Wer wagt es Rittersman oder Knapp,
Zu tauchen in diesen Schlund,” &c.

“HAVE I here a knight, or have I a page,
Who will dive in this gulf below ?
In the depth of the darkening whirlpool’s rage
A golden cup I throw.
The beaker shall fall to the brave man’s share
Who neither for life nor for death shall care.”

The monarch hurled down the golden cup
From the brow of that craggy steep ;
The raging gulf hath swallowed it up,
’Mid Charybdis’ waters deep.
“Who dares ? who dares ?—must I ask again—
To dive in this pool of the foaming main ?”

And each belted knight, and each tender page,
Looked down with their eager eyes ;
They gazed on the wild waves’ stormy rage,
But not one will win the prize ;
And a third time asked the king, with a frown,
“Is there no one here who will venture down ?”

With heads cast down they silent stand,
When a young page, gentle and gay,
Steps forth from that gay and glittering band,
And his mantle and girdle he throws away.
The knights and ladies, with silent awe,
The brave young squire all wondering saw.

And as he looks down from the rock on the scene,
And espies the whirlpool black,
Charybdis the waters she had drawn in
With a deafening sound gave back ;
And, foaming along with the thunder's roar,
The waves from the whirlpool's caverns pour.

And it seethes and hisses in boiling fray,
As when water on fire you dash ;
To heaven spouts up the foaming spray,
And wave pours on wave with an endless crash ;
And it thunders along again—again—
As if an ocean a sea would drain.

But now the tumult wild was hushed,
And black 'midst the foam so white
A chasm gaped wide as the dark waves rushed,
Deep as to hell and black as the night ;
Swift down through the rocky tunnel pour
The whirling waves with a hideous roar.

Now ! quick ere they come from that cave profound,
The youth kneels down to pray,
And—a cry of horror is heard around,
For already the waves have borne him away.
Mysteriously over that swimmer brave
Closes the whirlpool's turbid wave.

And now from that seething pool no sound
Is heard but the distant roar and swell.
Hark ! to the whisper that spreads around—
“ Brave boy ! God prosper thee now ! farewell ! ”
But louder and louder comes the roar
Of the distant waves as they thundering pour.

Though one should now in the chasm's wave
Hurl yonder a glittering crown,
I would not then that danger brave,—
No prize could tempt me to venture down.
No mortal may ever draw aside
The veil that the deep's dark caverns hide.

And many a bark, like that goodly cup,
Have sunk in the whirlpool's cave ;
Their masts and keels come shattered up
From that all-destroying grave.
Like a distant storm the roar grows clearer,—
Nearer the waters come, and nearer.

And it seethes and hisses in boiling fray,
As when water on fire you dash ;
To heaven spouts up the foaming spray,
And waves foam on waves with an endless crash,
As with the distant thunder's roar
The dark waves back from the whirlpool pour.

Ah ! see from the darkening chasm there
Peers up, as the swan's down white,
An arm and a glittering neck so fair,
Which struggles along with untiring might ;
In his left hand, high o'er the foaming wave,
He holds the goblet—that swimmer brave.

He breathes long and deep, and gazes around,
And hails the heavenly light ;
And now the whisper murmurs around,
“ He lives ! he is saved from the eavern of night !
From the dark abyss where the waters roll,
The brave one has brought back a living soul.”

He comes, girt round by that joyful band,—
Bends low at the monarch's chair,
And tenders the cup in his good right hand.
The king he beckons his daughter fair,
And she fills it up to the chased brim,
The sparkling bubbles dance round the rim.

“ Long live the king ! He may well rejoice
Who breathes 'mid the rosy light of day.
Fearful 's the roar of the whirlpool's voice ;
What the sea conceals no man may say,
For the gods, in their endless mercy, keep
Terror and night 'mid the bottomless deep.

"It bore me under with speed of light,—
Through the rocky tunnel I sank.
Who saw the matchless night
Of the maddened waters that inward drank;
Round like a top, borne below and away,
I sank from the golden light of the day.

"Then in hour of need to my God I cry,
'Mid the waters that round me rave,
From the raging deep a cliff rears high,
I grasp it trembling—now I'm saved ;
And near on a coral I spy the cup,
Safe from the gulf that would swallow it up.

"Deep as a mountain far appear,
'Mid the purple gloom below,
(For the eye may see when deaf's the ear)
The terrible forms that amid ocean glow ;
The jaws of that terrible hell-pool dark,
Swarm with the kraken and dragon and shark.

"Black are the forms that are gathered there
In their poisonous masses rolled ;
The star-fish, Medusa, with venomous hair,
Their fibrous stings unfold ;
And the water-snake with the glistening teeth—
Hyæna so fierce of the waves beneath.

"Half lifeless with terror still I hung,
'Mid those monsters dire I laid,
To the coral point I breathless clung
Alone, and far from all human aid ;
Far from all cheering human sound,
Deep 'midst the howling gulf profound.

"Shuddering, I thought they were coming more near
With a hundred creeping joints,
Then with a chilling burst of fear
I quitted my hold of the coral points ;
Again the whirlpool bears me away,—
But now brings me up to the light of day."

With a wondering air, replied the king—

“This goblet shall be thy share,
And, more precious still, this costly ring,

Set round with bright stones rare:
But first dive down, and again reveal
What the deepest caves below conceal.”

Then his daughter, pale and sorrowing, came,
And fell at her father's feet:

“Enough! enough of this terrible game!

Which no knight around would meet.
If thou canst not curb this wild desire,
Let these knights, if they dare go, shame the squire.”

Then the king swift hurl'd that golden cup

To the depths of that rocky hold:

“If again thou wilt bring that goblet up,
Thou shalt wear the good knight's belt of gold;
And thou shalt clasp for a loving bride
The weeping maiden who stands by my side.”

The page has aid from some spirit on high,

For his sunk eyes burn with a lambent fire,
As her cheeks glow like the morning sky,
And pale the bright deep tints expire;
And once more, that lovely prize to win,
Come life or come death, he plunges in.

And now they hear the distant roar

Of the back-returning waves;
They gaze in vain on the foam-swept shore,
As they pour from their hidden caves;
And again rush down those waters black,
But never shall that brave youth come back.

THE RAINBOW.

FROM SCHILLER.

OF pearls a bridge is reared
 O'er an ocean wide and grey;
 For a moment it is viewed,
 Then vanisheth away.

The highest mast of the tallest bark
 Might pass its arches through;
 No burden will the fabric bear,
 And it fadeth from the view.

It melts in the stream, and falleth,
 When the wild waves dash them by;
 Then say, where this bridge is founded;
 Who reared its arches high?

THE HURON'S DEATH-SONG.*

FROM SCHILLER.

SEE him sitting on his mat,
 As in life upright,
 With the bearing that he had
 When he saw the light.

Was his the hand, so true of stroke?
 Was his breath wont of yore
 To the Spirit clouds of smoke
 From the pipe to pour?

* This little poem Goethe thought the most original of Schiller's works.

Where is now his falcon eye,
Never known to fail;
On the waving grass to spy
The swift bison's trail?

Where are now the winged feet
That coursed o'er the snow;
Swift as "deer of ten," and fleet
As the mountain roe?

Where those arms, the bow of yore,
Stiffly bended back?
Never shall they strain it more;
Cold they lie, and slack.

He's journey'd to the hunting-ground,
Where no snow-cloud's glooming
O'er the sky; and all around
Maize is ever blooming.

Fish throng in the silent pool,
Birds in thickets sing;
There the woods of deer are full;
There it's ever spring.

With the spirits he feasts there—
We follow him to-morrow;
Now these holy rites we share,
And raise the chant of sorrow.

In the death-song lift the voice,
Spread your gifts around;
So his spirit shall rejoice,
In the hunting ground.

Place the axe beneath his head,
His grasp is stout and strong;
And the bear's haunch for the dead,
For the way is long.

THE HURON'S DEATH-SONG.

And his trusty knife so keen,
From the head of the bleeding foe;
With three good slashes, 'twas seen
To sever the scalp, I trow.

And place the war paints bright,
In the corpse's chilly hand;
That he may shine with a ruddy light,
In the far off spirit land.

THE OLD MARINER.

FROM THE GERMAN OF PEPE.

THE waves dashed fierce upon the strand,
Far o'er the cliffs the breeze blows free;
The mariner old on his deck doth stand,
"My men," he cries, "put out to sea."

"To sunny France we first are bound,
And then to England o'er the sea;
Brown beer they quaff on English ground,
In France, red wine they drink with glee."

The night winds whistle loud and shrill,
Strong 'gainst the swelling sails they blew;
When from the shore, his only child
Tenderly breathed her last adieu.

"Thou mightest a path in the green wood find,
By the flower-decked brook so clear and fair;
For chilling blows the rising wind,
And it lifts the locks of thy silvery hair."

"Why dost thou watch when none awake,
To see the moon-beam's ghastly light;
In thy warm chamber thy rest to take,
Thou shouldest have slept through the silent night."

Peace, maiden, peace, by Heligoland,
By Heligoland, 'neath the waves profound
Thy father sleeps—beside the strand,
And his gallant men lie slumbering round.

THE DANCE OF DEATH.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GÖTHE.

THE sexton* looks forth in the murk midnight,
On the graves below that lay :
The moon shines forth with her yellow light,
And the churchyard is bright as day.
The ground upheaves—from the earth's dark womb,
Come women and men; from each mound and tomb,
In garments flowing and white.

And now, what terrible joy behold,
As those skeletons dance around ;
The rich, the poor, the young, and the old,
Their cerements check their bound.
All shame from those bones has passed by,
And they shake off their shrouds, which fluttering lie
On the hillocks of turf around.

Joyously shakes each skeleton thigh,
Horribly loud they clatter ;
They rattle and shake their bones so dry,
As when wood upon wood you batter.
Then the tempting fiend to the sexton spoke,
And the whisper seemed like a ghastly joke,
“ Steal the robe of a skeleton dancer.”

'Tis thought, 'tis done, and with fearful flight,
Through the church doors old he scrambles ;
While the calm moon still with her holy light,
Looks down on those terrible gambols.

* In Germany, a watchman, or “ thurm-wächter,” frequently lives in the church tower, to give alarm in cases of fire.

And they vanish now like a passing cloud,
Each donning in haste his spotted shroud,
His lowly grave is seeking.

Still one is left, who is prying about,
O'er the graves he looks with care ;
No thief can there be in that ghastly rout,
Hush ! he scents his prey in the midnight air.
He rattles the door of that old church tower,
For the sexton in a right happy hour,
'Twas studded o'er with crosses.

The shroud he must have, and he stays for nought,
To the corbels of stone he's clinging ;
And now with the speed of a winged thought,
To the battlements quick he's springing.
Alas ! for the sexton, that terrible thing
From story to story is clambering,
Like a long-legged loathsome spider.

The sexton turns pale, with chill fear he shook,
He drops the snowy shroud ;
And a fearful glance around he took,
As the iron cog of a wheel clicks loud.
The moon is hid, shrill crows the cock,
ONE strikes the deeply thundering clock,
Then vanished the phantom.

THE LION'S JOURNEY.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREILIGRATH.*

THE desert king, the lion, his empire wanders through,
He lies in the marsh, where the giant rushes hide him
from the view ;

* Lately a merchant's clerk in London.

Where gazelles and giraffes are drinking, he cowers in
his reedy bed,
And the leaves of the forest sycamore are quivering
o'er his head.

At eve in the Hottentot's poor village, when glow the
ruddy fires,
When on the broad wide table-land, blaze up no signal
pyres;
When the savage Caffre wanders alone through the still
caroo,
When the antelope is sleeping beside the agile *gnu*.

See, majestic through the desert comes the giraffe
stately, slow,
To dip his red and burning tongue in the pools that
turbid flow;
Stretching forth with joy to taste it, panting for the
pleasure,
Reaching with his long neck o'er to reach the liquid
treasure.

Sudden, rising from his ambush, from the reedy jungle
creeping,
Springs the lion on his charger, like a knightly horse-
man leaping.
Never in a prince's stable was there rich caparison
Half so fair as skin of charger that the desert king
is on.

In its long neck's hidden muscle drive the claws that
deeply tear;
O'er the spotted flank of the steed is hanging the rider's
yellow hair.
With a low deep moan of anguish flies he o'er the sandy
ground;
See the swiftness of the camel, joined to the panther's
bound.

Now the moonlit sands he is spurring with his flying
tread,
From their caverns glare his fiery eyes, all starting from
his head.
Down his dark neck, long and spotted, bloody drops are
fleeing,
Of the heart of that winged creature the deserts hear
the beating.

On his track the obscene vulture, flies swooping through
the sky ;
On his *spoor* the grim hyæna, plunderer of the graves,
is nigh.
After bounds the agile panther—how the Caffres dread
his wrath,
Blood and sweat of fiercest anguish paint the forest
monarch's path.

Trembling they see, on his living throne, the savage
monarch there,
With his fierce sharp claws deep driven in, his coloured
saddle tear.
Ever, till his life is over, must the giraffe hurry fast ;
By no rude shock that monarch can from his throne be
cast.

Reeling to the desert's boundary falls the charger dead ;
his blood
Bestained carcase, travel-worn, is his royal rider's food.
Far in the east, in Madagascar, rises morn on airy
pinions ;
So rides the wild beast's monarch by night through his
dominions.

THE PINES.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREILIGRATH.

ON the mountain's storm-swept peak
 The dark tall pines are growing,
 Through the rock's deepest fissures
 Their creeping roots are going.

Their lofty tops are waving
 Amid the clouds on high,
 As if their clasping branches
 Would grasp the birds that fly.

Yes! the rain-filled, ever changing,
 Striped vapour of the cloud,
 Floats round thy mighty limbs
 Like to an airy shroud.

Deep 'mid thy roots entwining,
 Fibrous, ever swelling;
 Fearful to the peasant's fancy
 Are the mandrakes dwelling.

Down in the mountain's deepest heart,
 From the rock's surface far;
 Where, in their secret caverns,
 The richest metals are.

Thy twining roots are studded
 Down in the vaults of night,
 With the yellow gold rich glowing,
 And with the diamond bright.

On high, amid thy branches,
 Bright light and life is glancing;
 Above thy boughs the sunlight glitters—
 Below, the mine dwarfs dancing.

He in this silent mountain
Both rules and orders all ;
The dark and swarthy spirits
Are ready at his call.

Oft in the dreary sunset,
When the night winds are blowing,
Clad in a black storm-cloud,
You see him upward going.

Whatever the birds may utter,
You catch with listening ear,
You hear the whispering murmur
Of the streamlet flowing near.

Near the rude cavern-dwellings
Of the wild beasts of the mountain,
Where peace, sweet peace is flowing,
Like some eternal fountain.

Though far from man thy red-snake roots,
Serve as a ladder there,
Well may thy dark green branches
Wave gladly in the air.

Well may the balmy treasure,
Drop from thy yellow core,
Well may thy dark green branches
Be hung with dew-drops o'er.

O, well may ye gladly rustle,
Ye pines that the wind is ever waving,
Lonely on the mountain's summit,
Ever green, the wild storm braving.
O Pine! thou emblem of the free,
Would I could change my lot with thee.

*

*

*

*

*

From deck of the noble frigate,
Rears up the lofty mast,
That bends 'neath the sail and pennon,
But more with the long years past.

The storm and the foaming surges,
Hear the old giant's wail,
"It saves me not, this canvass,
This white and swelling sail.

"What help from coloured pennon?
O'er cordage twined o'er,
A fierce and earnest longing,
Drives me to mountain shore.

"They cut me down, the woodman,
In the strength of early prime,
I've floated o'er the ocean,
To many a distant clime.

"I've floated o'er the ocean,
To where the sea-kings dwell,
Of black and fair-haired nations,
The wanderer could tell.

"To icy cliffs of the northland.
Through frozen seas I sailed,
The palms of the burning region,
On their own shore I hailed.

"Home to the silent mountain,
Swiftly I hasten now,
To the dwarf spirits' kingdom,
Where tempests fan the brow

"O silence of the forest,
Calm of eternity!
O solitude of shadows!
How far art thou from me."

THE SEA WAIF.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREILIGRATH.

THE North Sea toss'd the pallid dead
 Beyond the green wave's reach,
 A fisherman saw him lying
 Upon the broad sea-beach.

He pressed the blood and the salt-sea brine
 From the long scarf of the dead ;
 From his breast he raised the corselet,
 And the helm from off his head.

The helm, with the plume bright coloured,
 The crescent and agraffe ;
 The sea-sand hid the legend,
 The "Icber Turk als Pfaff."*

Why lift the drown'd man's corselet—
 Why drag the wretch to land ?
 Never shall sword or rudder
 Be grasped by that hand.

As he, on the deck of the Spaniard,
 For a giddy footing strove,
 The broad axe of a seaman
 His hand from his body clove.

Backward he fell, fell, groaning deep,
 Into the wreck-strewn sea,
 Still from the stump of the corse's arm
 The blood drips fearfully.

* The ballad is founded on an incident in the wars of the Dutch and Spaniards, (1579), when the former wore in their helms the motto, "Better be a Turk than a Papist."

It floats by the coast of Zealand,
But never stayeth there ;
On the sandy shores of Friesland
There stands a woman fair.

An anchor, black and rusty,
She stayeth there beside ;
'Tis a mark to show the mariners
How far roars up the tide.

Like a statue doth she seem of Hope,
Wild glares her eager eye,
When rises up the coming sail,
Like a speck against the sky.

The waves have borne that pallid hand,
Open, as if to clasp—
Its white and stiffened fingers
Her foot would seem to grasp.

There 's a ring on the corse's finger,
Like a bud upon a stalk ;
On the stone is deeply graven
A lion and a hawk.

O far, far, far from other lands
This falcon bore its flight,
This pale, cold hand, now lifeless,
Had once the lion's might.

She 'll never twine another wreath
For this dead warrior's brow ;
Already it 'gins to darken—
I cannot see her now.

I cannot see the hot-tear drops
Falling upon the strand,
But I see her, trembling on the beach,
Take up the clay cold hand.

In her long white scarf she wraps it—
That relic of the dead ;
No figure of Hope—she speedeth,
With low and downcast head.

A RITORNEL.

FROM THE GERMAN OF RÜCKERT.

BLOOM of the Almond tree,
Strewn by the wind upon thy path, O, Spring,
Flying before to welcome thee.

O, Snow-drop—tender flower—
Still lingering when the snow has long since melted,
Like a white flock all huddling from the shower.

Thou modest Violet,
That sayest, " When I go, then comes the rose ;
But for her coming thou must tarry yet."

O, Lily, fair and white,
The garden flowers are lauding their Creator ;
Thou art their priest clothed in thy robe of light.

Thy stalk is like a wand :
Thou hast a name among thy sister flowers,
God's angels bear thee in their hand.

And thou, thou blooming Brier,
Think not the thorn will wound the hand that plucks ;
It is a spur to rouse the keen desire.

O, Flower that blooms by night,
By day one cannot steal a kiss from thee ;
At eve she yields her lips to every wight.

O, verdant Myrtle bough,
Fair lot is thine; in life, a wreath for love—
In death, a crown for innocence pale brow.

O, blossom of the Vine,
Forget not what thou promised in May,
To give me in October purple wine.

And thou, too, Ivy spray,
Lately I thought it was to cling round me;
Thou waved gently in the breath of May.

O, sombre Cypress tree,
In thought I may thy dark green shade approach,
But never nearer would I welcome thee.

O, mournful Cypress tree,
Since thou must hate, or else for aye forget,
Hate rather than for aye forget me.

THE WIND.

FROM THE OLD WELSH OF THE BARD TALIESIN.

GREAT monster, reared before the fearful flood,
Not framed of flesh or bone or purple blood;
Without a name, with foot on sea and land;
No muscle, vein, or nerve; no arm, no hand.
Never the older, though a hundred year
Thou live; thou who hast not a fear
Of man, or of man's works—who hut and tower
Shatters, in all the grandeur of thy power;
Just as the east wind leaping through a wood,
Snaps the dry boughs above the wild wolf's brood.
Thou art a spirit whom we may not bind—
For mighty is the wind.

A creature that on earth was never born,
Not named by Adam on creation's morn;
A shapeless wanderer to eternity,
Roaming in all the maddened joy of revelry—
Mocking at time, all change and sorrow scorning,
Knowing his doom upon the judgment morning—
Is shared by earth and man—bringer of woe—
Whither God pleases on this world below.
At once on sea and land, on wave and shore,
As fierce, unfettered, as the foaming boar.
He is a spirit whom you may not bind—
For mighty is the wind.

Like a great banner in the tempest spread,
A stormy canopy above our head;
Stern and unchanging, he ne'er drops a tear—
Now mute, now groaning o'er a nation's bier.
Now here, now there, now raging hot, now cold;
Ardent at once, and courteous, calm and bold,
Spreading disorder on the peaceful earth,
Laughing and shouting in his fearful mirth;
Nor staying to repair the evil wrought,
No spoil or plunder from the war he sought.
He is a spirit whom you may not bind—
For mighty is the wind.

Whatever quarter the round moon be in,
He works his will without one stain of sin.
Forth in a whirlwind from the fiery cloud
He comes, and forests at his presence bowed;
Noblest of all, the angels of the broad blue heaven,
Greater than the forked lightning or the ruddy leven.
With the loud roar of vengeance in the rending skies
On tempest wings the potent seraph flies.
To what doomed spot of earth his God may send,
Thither, with all the pride of greatness, he will wend.
He is a spirit whom you may not bind—
For mighty is the wind.

HASTINGS.

[Suggested by the monkish chronicle of William of Malmesbury, who was personally intimate with the Conqueror and his cruel son, and who mentions many picturesque incidents connected with the battle, that handed over England from one usurper of her throne to another, that are omitted by better historians.]

* * * * *

AN angry man was the Bastard,
 As he dashed his wine-cup down,
 And darker grew his furrowed brow,
 And blacker grew his frown.

He swore on the holy relics,
 "By the glory of the Lord,"*
 Till he'd hurled the *nithering*† from his throne,
 He'd never sheathe his sword.

And he tore in twain his royal robe,
 And laid his mantle down,
 And donned his dinted hauberk,
 And doffed his father's crown.

While the Norman barks are manning,
 He paces on the sand,
 At the white rock walls of Britain
 He shakes his mailed hand.

On the eve of good St. Michael,
 His ship with the crimson sail,
 Like a falcon on its quarry,
 Flies fast before the gale.

* The favourite oath of the Bastard.

† A Saxon term of reproach, used also by the Norsemen.

Their glittering vanes like golden stars,
Shine bright upon the deep,
Like some dream's gorgeous pageant
Across a poet's sleep.

Still as the slain in battle,
The realm of England lay;
The doomed upon the morrow,
Are banqueting to-day.

Blythest of all is Harold,
His gem-bossed robe gleams bright;
Though a shroud shall wrap that monarch
Before the morrow's light.

There's bloody stains on every brow,
There's blood on every hand,
And viewless forms of terror
Move silent 'mid the band.

A weary man was Harold,
Weary of foeman's slaughter,
Of press, and throng, and battle,
Down by dark Humber's water.

A panting vassal enters,
"The Norman's come," he cries;
"Begone," said the jeering nobles,
"The Saxon villain lies."

"There's camped a host at Hastings
Of shaven priests in arms;"
"They're pilgrims," said a vavasour,
"Poor chanters of the psalms."

"By Heaven!" cried noble Harold,
"No woman's priests are these;
Arm for the shock of battle,
This is no time for ease."

*

*

*

From the one camp rang the shout and song
 Into the midnight air;
 From the other, to the silent stars
 Arose the pious prayer.

The hymn to Christ's sweet mother
 Was heard by God on high;
 The curse of the drunken jesters
 Drew vengeance from the sky.

The night, the still calm night, went by,
 Red morning dawned again;
 With an eagle's glance the Bastard
 Swept the broad level plain.

To the chanted hymn of Roland
 The Norman host came on;
 From his cloudy home of darkness
 Came forth the golden sun.

Like eagles on untiring wing
 The gonfanel* flew past;
 The war shouts 'mid that forest
 Moved like a tempest blast.

With his gold bound brow, the Bastard
 Shone fair with banded mail;
 Like the ruddy flamet† from Heaven
 That gleams on shattered sail.

Gay hearted were the spearmen
 To leave the trenched camp;
 High shone the sacred banner‡
 Above their measured tramp.

* Norman pennons.

† St. Elmo's fire: a phosphorence seen on masts during a storm.

‡ A banner consecrated for William by the Pope, who favoured his claim.

In the teeth of the bearded Saxon
Drove fast the arrow sleet ;
Ne'er upon gilded gambazon
Did such a tempest beat.

The slingers plied the leathern thong,
And the Norman shafts they flew ;
And 'mid the Kentish chosen van
A bloody lane, they hew.

'Mid Martel's* band, the Saxon axe
Cleaves through bright painted shield ;
And shouts, and yells, and shrieks, and groans,
Go up from gory field.

Like a peasant churl fights Harold,
And Gurth is by his side ;
Like two strong, lusty swimmers,
They stem the battle tide.

Ah, God ! a shaft has pierced the brain
Of him who wears the crown ;
Like a monarch to his slumber
He lapseth slowly down.

As if in grief for Harold,
The sun sinks to his rest ;
Like a gore-bestained conqueror
Far in the crimson west.

* * * *

Throned on a heap of English dead,
Where reddest was the sod,
Where Harold fell, the Bastard kneels,
And thanks his gracious God.

* One of the most distinguished chieftains of the invader's army.

THE ARRAIGNMENT OF THE DEAD.

[At the funeral of William the Conqueror, in the Abbey of St. Stephen's, at Caen, a burgher advanced from amongst the crowd, and appealing, by right of an ancient law, to Rollo, the great leader of the Norsemen, and using the set form of invocation, "Ha ! Ro, à l'aide, mon prince," claimed the ground in which the tyrant's grave was sunk, as that on which his own father's house had stood, and of which he had been unjustly deprived by the fierce bastard prince. Henry dared not neglect his demand, and for so many hundred marks the brave citizen parted with his birth-right.]

'Twas by the holy altar,
Where the yellow tapers stood,
And the light was deep and solemn
As the dim light of a wood ;
'Twas when all silent stood the crowd,
That one clear voice rang deep and loud,—
"Ha ! Ro, à l'aide,
Ha ! Ro à l'aide, mon prince."

From the throng of pallid gazers
Stepped one who boldly said,
"I claim this narrow resting-place,
Prepared for the dead ;
No prince of royal name
Should glory in his shame.
Ha ! Ro, à l'aide,
Ha ! Ro, à l'aide, mon prince."

He was a simple burgher,
But he showed no sign of fear,
As he stood beside the crowned dead—
Beside a monarch's bier.
The crypt returned the sound
Back from its deeps profound.
"Ha ! Ro, à l'aide,
Ha ! Ro, à l'aide, mon prince."

"There stood my father's cottage,
 Where that jewelled altar stands;
 This stately abbey's reared
 Upon my father's land;
 Yon tyrant's brow is stained with sin,
 His name shall be cursed by his own proud kin.
 Ha! Ro, à l'aide,
 Ha! Ro, à l'aide, mon prince.

"'Twas a blood-stained hand that raised
 This costly shrine to God;
 Already the grim oppressor
 Is smitten with his rod."
 Still on the bier, as he spoke, the light
 Of the rainbow pane fell fair and bright.
 "Ha! Ro, à l'aide,
 Ha! Ro, à l'aide, mon prince."

And it seemed to tinge with the flush of shame
 The pale cheek of the dead;
 To a whisper died the solemn chant,
 The monks hung down their head;
 And the mourning warriors, gathered round,
 Shuddered to hear that boding sound,—
 "Ha! Ro, à l'aide,
 Ha! Ro, à l'aide, mon prince.

"When small and great shall trembling stand
 Before God's fearful face,
 Before his bright-faced angel
 I'll claim this holy place;
 When the blast of the dreadful trump has blown,
 And he stands before his Judge alone.
 "Ha! Ro, à l'aide,
 Ha! Ro, à l'aide, mon prince."

Then one stood forth, with a pale clear brow,
 And his father's haughty frown,
 And paid the price that the burgher claimed
 Of him that wore the crown,—

Of him whose iron-mailed hand
 Won for himself the Saxon's land.
 'Twas in the days when truth and right
 Full seldom conquered power and might.
 "Ha ! Ro, à l'aide,
 Ha ! Ro, à l'aide, mon prince."

THE DEATH OF RUFUS.

In the white city's* palace,
 Sits Rufus at the board,
 With many an abbot round him,
 And many a Norman lord.
 The dark red wine of Malvoisin,
 Flew fast amid the glee :
 While the brutal laugh† of Rufus,
 Rang o'er the revelry.
 No need of torch in banquet hall,
 For the sun was bright on high ;
 Still like the angels' dwelling place,
 It glowed in yonder sky.
 At St. Swithin's shrine the shaven priest,
 A pious mass had said,
 A mass for the buried Saxon prince,
 A mass for the royal dead.
 Ah ! little dreamt that savage king,
 When the jest he shouted loud ;
 Of him who wore the conquered crown,
 Of sepulchre or shroud.
 A white robed monk rushed swiftly in,
 Wild was his frenzied air ;
 Though his brain was seared with vision,
 His hands were clasped in prayer.

* Winchester.

+ The distinguishing trait of Rufus, as the savage sneer and frown was of his stern father.

On the fierce king's lips the mock of scorn,
Died in a curse away ;
As he stamped his foot, and shouted,
"What would the driveller say?"

"Hear, monarch," said that prophet,
"Beware thee of the chase ;
I saw a blood-red comet,
Hang o'er a blasted place.

"God's wrath is on thy cruel sport,
Outstretched is his hand ;
His flaming sword he quivers
O'er thy black and guilty land."

Silent, the king in wonder,
Gazed at the monk who spoke ;
No voice of idle mocker
The solemn silence broke.

"I saw thee come in vision,*
Unto St. Swithin's shrine ;
Crowned as for fight or banquet,
With that haughty mien of thine.

"I saw thee like a were-wolf,
Seize on the relics there ;
And with thy teeth (stern Rufus smiled)
The sainted treasures tear.

"But a blow from an unseen angel's hand,
Dashed thee into a tomb ;
And smoke and flame from the vault came up,
"Till the stars were hid in gloom."

"Is this thy dream, thou dotard?"
And his laughter shook the hall ;
"A tale to please a holy nun !
Go, paint it on thy wall.

* This monk's vision is matter of history.

"A health," he cried, and passed the bowl
To him who sat him next,
"Waeshael to the fat monk's treasure!
Hid in the barred chest.

"Why silent?" quoth the monarch;
"I only love the bold;
'Tis but a monk, a dreaming priest,
Who sells his dreams for gold.

"Give the fool a hundred shillings:"
He dashed it down in scorn—
"Thy soul will need some masses
Before the morrow's morn."

"A sturdy knave!" grim Rufus cried;
"But fill another bowl;
I'll never starve my body
In hopes to save my soul.

"Let women pore o'er painted books,
And tremble at a dream;
Who mates with monks and shavelings,
A coward slave I deem.

"Let Robert, in a land of fire,
A beggared hermit roam,
While I, with hound and falcon,
Hunt in my royal home.

"Go, bid the vassals saddle
The steed at *Mons* I rode;
By the holy cross of Lucca!*
The best I e'er bestrode.

"I love the chase, 'tis mimic war,
And the hollow bay of hound,
The heart of the poorest Norman
Beats quicker at the sound."

* The favourite oath of Rufus.

"Go not, my liege," said Tyrrel,
"Already, in yon bay,
The band that's bound for Poictou,
For thee, their monarch, stay."

"Talk not of dreams," said Rufus;
A savage oath he swore;
"Though yon wood were full of devils,
I'll hunt the chafed boar."

* * * *

As the red sun was setting,
Rides the gay cavalcade,
By many a ruined village,
Through many a tangled glade.

The woods, in the calm, fair sunset,
Blazed with a fiery light,
O'er ruined church and hamlet,
Came slowly on the night.

Fair as the last sad parting
The sun shall take of earth,
All silent rode the hunters,
For it seemed no place of mirth.

Deep lay the giant shadows,
Dark, dark on every side,
Like a countless host of spirits
Stood the forest, spreading wide.

High o'er the rest, like Kaisars,
The oaks hoar monsters stood,
No eye may pierce the darkness,
The blackness of that wood;

Like the roof of some great temple,
Their great mossed boughs are spread,
Scarce can the sun's last glory
Stream through the shade o'er head.

A deer burst forth in panic,
 At the savage laugh and song,
 Hounds from the leash are parted,
 The hunters sweep along.

In a broad green glade stands Rufus,
 Fast the swift "quarry" flies ;
 From parting rays of sunlight,
 The monarch veils his eyes.

"Shoot, Tyrrell, shoot!" he thunders—
 Swift flew the glancing dart,
 It pierced the crowned hunter,
 It quivered in his heart.

* * * *

To the gate of the fair white city
 Comes the charcoal-burner's wain,
 It brings no stag for abbot's board,
 It brings a monarch slain.

At fall of eve, a holy mass
 Chants the monk at St. Swithin's shrine,
 "Great God!" the dreamer mutters,
 "Thine is the vengeance! thine!"

THE REBEL EARL.

[THE civil wars of the time of Henry III. are, perhaps, the most barbarous that we find recorded in our history. Father fighting against son, and son against father. Among the group of rebellious nobles, Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester, stands conspicuous in savage majesty. "Simon, je vous défie," was the cry of the young prince, not, it must be confessed, at the sanguinary battle of Evesham, but at an earlier conflict, when his aged father was placed in the van of his enemies.]

Down on dark rebel host
 The aged monarch's gazing ;
 Red as the boding comet
 The dragon* banner 's blazing.

* The emblem of Henry III.

Shrill through the sunny sky
Rang out the prince's cry,
Loud o'er war's revelry,
" *Simon, je vous défie !*"

By the bright flowing Severn
There was hewing of the mail ;
There was driving of the hammer
Through iron ring and scale.
Still ran the fierce war cry,
Loud 'mid the din on high,
Shrill o'er the tempest glee,
" *Simon, je vous défie !*"

Through blazoned coat and *aketon*
The winged arrow sped,
Through barred helm and target
With the foeman's heart-blood red.
Shrill through the sunny sky
Rang out the prince's cry,
Loud o'er war's revelry,
" *Simon, je vous défie !*"

The white cross of the rebel earl
Grew crimson with the dye ;
Fast o'er his mangled body
The cowering rebels fly.
Still rang the fierce war-cry,
Loud 'mid the din on high,
Shrill o'er the tempest glee,
" *Simon, je vous défie !*"

One knight a hundred cowards
Is driving with his brand,
Till, weary of the slaughter,
He stays his blooded hand.
No longer through the sky
Rang out the fierce war-cry,
Above war's revelry,
" *Simon, je vous défie !*"

The old king clasps the victor,
As bridegroom might a bride;
Red stained with blood of rebel
The Severn flows beside.
No longer through the sky
Rang out the fierce war-cry,
Above war's revelry,
"Simon, je vous défie!"

Robes that great queens have woven
On the red field are strewn;
Their wearers' helms are cloven,
Their blazoned garb is hewn.
No longer through the sky
Rang out the fierce war-cry,
Above war's revelry,
"Simon, je vous défie."

Leicester's proud earl has fallen
Upon the bloody field;
His heart's best blood is welling
Upon his battered shield.
No longer through the sky
Rang out the fierce war-cry,
Above war's revelry,
"Simon, je vous défie!"

Better is honest burgher
Than traitor knight or earl,—
Better the lowest varlet
Than such a rebel churl.
No longer through the sky
Rang out the fierce war-cry,
Above war's revelry,
"Simon, je vous défie!"

England may mourn the slaughter
Of Evesham's bloody fight;
There's food for hawk or falcon,
For raven and for kite.

No longer through the sky
Rang out the fierce war-cry,
Above war's revelry,
" *Simon, je vous défie !*"

The wild birds' cruel talons
Tear the knight's silken vest ;
Shreds of the bloody raiment
Will "theek" their rock-built nest.
No longer through the sky
Rang out the fierce war-cry,
Above war's revelry,
" *Simon je vous défie !*"

KING EDMUND.

[THIS Saxon king was stabbed by a robber, whom he attempted to turn out of his palace hall, at a banquet, where the daring villain had bearded his monarch.]

THE torch's flame and the broad hearth's blaze,
Gleam bright on cup and bowl ;
The pride of a crowned conqueror,
Filled the Saxon monarch's soul.

And the crimson banner shed a glare,
Not upon spear and sword ;
But on the noisy revellers,
Seated around the board.

" Waes hael to the great King Edward,
Hail to that flag of thine ;
Which struck a fear to the burghers five,
To the men of the Mercian Tyne.

" Waes hael to the king whose fetters,
Bind round the Danish thane ;
Instead of the golden bracelet,
Let them wear the iron chain.

“Waes hael to the blood red banner,
That waved on the old gray wall ;*
Hail to the sword that made the Dane,
Before the rood cross fall.”

The seven chiefs of England,
Do homage to their lord ;
The seven chiefs of England,
Are sitting round his board.

“Give God the praise who smote the foe,”
Thus an abbot chode his pride :
“’Twas no mass of thine that shook their ranks,”
The angry monarch cried.

“Go, scourge him from our presence—
’Tis these, and such as these,
Who beard their king, and ’fore his throne,
Refuse to bend their knees.”

“Proud king, thy heart is evil,
The God thou hast defied ;
The God who smites the tyrant,
Rebuke thee for thy pride.

“A holy hymn was the battle cry,
Struck terror to the Dane ;
St. Cuthbert’s Cross was thy standard,
On Mercia’s battle plain.

“’Twas the breath of prayer that winged the shaft,
That smote the rebel crew ;
An angel form led on the van,
When the battle trumpet blew.

“God’s servant thou hast scorned,
His vengeance thou shalt see ;
On the brow that bears the Saviour’s cross,
Is the brand of infamy.”

* The old Roman wall in Northumberland.

* * * *

Loud through the palace portal,
Come the deep groans within ;
It rose above the song and shout,
And all the stormy din.

“ ’Tis but the monk,” the monarch said,
“ With biting cords he’s bound ;
Stripes are the fat monk’s penance,
With stripes we lash the hound.”

Whose was that laugh which rings so fierce,
Like a fiend that mocking laughs ;
With eyes like a wild beast glaring,
A cup the stranger quaffs.

But while he drains the flagon,
He gazes on the king ;
And his restless eyes are like a snake’s,
Before it makes its spring.

A thousand angry passions
In that dark face have reign ;
His hair is black and matted,
Like a wild creature’s mane.

With a bound the Saxon monarch,
Leapt fierce upon his prey ;
“ Shall a man whose hands are bloody,
Be seen in the light of day ?”

With gnashing teeth they grapple,
They struggle with the sword ;
Ere those savage men are parted,
Slain is the Saxon lord.

One look of rage the robber cast,
Upon the fallen chief ;
Then sheathed his knife and went to death,
Without one thought of grief.

DECIUS.

[In the great battle between the Romans and the Latins, B.C. 339, the omens being unfavourable to his country, the consul, Decius, determined to devote himself to death, to save the armies of the seven-hilled city. "Putting on his white robe," says Livy, "he covered his head, and, placing his foot on the blade of a javelin, repeated a prayer to the nine gods." Then, mounting a charger, this lion-heart hewed himself a grave in the squadrons of the foes that strove to overpower the infant Hercules.]

BENEATH Great Vesta's * mountain
 There's sound of battle clang,
 Far o'er the distant ocean
 The brazen clangour rang.

The flame of the lava torrent
 Shines upon helm and blade ;
 On broad spear head, and banner,
 And men for death arrayed.

Through the black tempest vapour,
 In the troubled sky above,
 The flame, as it strove in passion,
 Glared like the eye of Jove.

In vain, the Roman squadrons
 Cleave the proud Samnite's shield ;
 In vain, their serried phalanx
 Drives o'er the trampled field.

In vain, the Roman pilum
 The rebel Latin smites ;
 To save the sacred capitol,
 In vain the consul fights.

Still o'er the warring nations
 The volcan casts a glow ;
 Red as the waves of Phlegethon,
 In the dark realms below.

* Vesuvius, near which the battle was fought.

Its fiery tongues shoot flaming,
Red as Jove's arrowy leven,
Seeming to strive to reach the sun,
And blot it from the heaven.

Mars smiles not on his banner,
Amid the weapon's jar ;
On unbroke ranks the grim god's wolf
Shines like a silver star.

"Would he that smote the Volsci
Could break their bristling rank ;
Would their black steeds were plunging
In Pontus' marshes dank.

"There's vengeance in the heaven,
'Twas shuddered at in hell,
When, in the pride of conquest,
Titus, the hero, fell."

"Peace, cowards!" cried the consul ;
"I swear by the gods above,
No victim ever offered,
So pleased the mighty Jove.

"Think of the Seven hill'd City—
On, with thy betters, on ;
We'll drive them in the ocean
Before the setting sun."

"Up! up! ye warriors—kneeling,
Poor beggars! for a life"—
Cry the sneering Latin spearmen,
As nearer swells the strife."

"We bend but to the Thunderer—
We heed no jeers from thee ;
We bend to the God of the Trident,
Who ruleth yonder sea."

In vain, against the Latin,
They hurry firm and fast ;
As vain as on yon mountain
Beats ever the sea blast.

“ To the gods, the hell-born Manes,
I vow this hoary head—
Come, Pontifex !” he shouted—
“ Prepare me for the dead.”

The white robe, bound with purple,
He wrapped him around,
Then veiled his old and scarred brow,
And leapt upon the ground.

With bare feet, on a pilum,
He stood awhile in prayer,
And looked on the foe with a glance of fire,
And a wild and fixed stare.

“ O ye nine gods of Hades !
That rule in hell below,
Prosper the Roman armies,
And blast this vaunting foe.

“ Hear me, thou burning mountain !
Dark prison of the slave !*
Grant that red throngs of foemen
May 'tend me to the grave.

“ Hear me, great Sun ! whose parting ray
Warms my pale, aged cheek :
Great Jove ! great Jove ! thou crowned one !
Speak to thy servant—speak !”

With a roar, the burning mountain
Poured up a jet of fire,
The consul bowed his hoary head,
And hailed great Heaven's sire.

* The ancients believed that in volcanoes were imprisoned the defeated giants.

“Go tell my brother consul
How an aged warrior died—
That he went, like a youthful bridegroom,
To meet a happy bride—

“Crowned with the wreaths of glory
I won in the days of yore,
Clad with a priest's white vestments,
Soon to be red with gore.”

Then girding tight his blanched robes,
One look at the coming night,
He dashed on his sable charger
Into the thickest fight.

Like the waves upon a diver,
The dark ranks closed him in ;
They see his white robes waving
Amid the battle din.

Like a sea-bird's snowy pinion,
Fluttering against a cloud,
When the rain-winds cover the darkened earth
With vapours like a shroud.

*

*

*

*

While still the sun was setting
Up in the crimson skies,
The shouts of joy and triumph
From Roman warriors rise.

CURTIUS.

[LIVY, that delightful reciter of old wives' fables, tells us that, A.U.C. 391, a wide chasm suddenly opened in the forum of Rome, which the augurs pronounced would never close until Rome had thrown in that which she valued most. M. Curtius, a brave young patrician, on hearing the oracle, clothed himself in complete steel, exclaimed that arms and valour were the dearest treasure of the Romans, and, praying to the gods, leaped into the abyss, which closed over his head.]

THERE's silence in the forum,—
 No more the human tide,
 Low murmuring like the ocean,
 Pours through its portals wide.

There's fear on pallid faces,
 The hum of men is mute,—
 Hushed is the mummer's jesting,
 Hushed is the Oscan flute.*

No maidens throng the market,
 No traders hurry there;
 Nought breaks the mournful silence,
 But some poor trembler's prayer.

But still, as when new founded
 By Romulus divine;
 High o'er the seven-hilled city
 The rock-built temples shine.

When the blood of a murdered brother,
 The twin son of the god,
 Fell on the fresh raised rampart,
 And crimsoned all the sod.

* The Oscan mimes were celebrated in Rome at this era.

With dusky wave the Tyber
Flows through the silent plain,
Silent as when in senate-house*
The aged men lay slain.

Jove veils his face in anger,
So boding augurs say;
On a chasm in the forum
Looks down the god of day.

Jove's lightnings light the city:
'Twas his globe-shaking thunder
That furrowed up that chasm,
And tore the earth asunder.

The seven hills in that abyss
Were but a heap of sand;
In vain the sacred offerings
Thrown by the pontiff's hand.

"The Roman's dearest treasure,"
The holy augur cries,
"Alone will fill that yawning gulf,
Black as the tempest skies."

Gay through the spacious forum
A bride, new wedded, came,
Blushing 'mid glad array of friends,
That shout her bridegroom's name.

And by her side rode Curtius,
Of Rome's fair sons the pride;
Down through the trembling multitude
The youthful warriors ride.

He hears the whispered words of Jove—
"A heart for every fate
Is Rome's best pride and treasure,
The bulwark of her state."

* At the sack of the city by the Gauls.

“ In vain the Gauls were routed
By Allia’s hoary mount,—
In vain with gore we stained
The river’s bubbling fount,—

“ If Mars in day of anger,
In wrath’s hot fiery hour,
Hath smote the sacred forum,
And shattered Tyber’s tower.”

He clasped his bride, a moment gazed
On capitol and hill,
Beside the sun-lighted Tyber
A moment standeth still.

One prayer to Rome’s dark manes,
One glance at her who wept,
Then with a bound the goaded steed
Into the chasm leapt.

With a bursting shout to heaven
Of joy unstained by tear,
With a gaze of awe and wonder,
Of terror and of fear,

They see the jaws of the dark abyss,
The home of the noble dead,
Silent and slowly closing
Above that victim’s head.

’Twas men like these who founded Rome,
Who kings from their proud thrones hurled;
’Twas such as these that Cæsar led
To conquer half the world.

THE HYMN OF THE SALIAN PRIESTS.

I.

GREAT son of Jove, no pæans please thy ear,
 No song of hunters 'mid the forest drear ;
 No chant of shepherd, when they slay the lamb,
 No hymn of maidens when they lead the ram,
 Bound round with flower-wreaths, to the mystic shrine
 Of mighty Pan, or the wood-nymphs divine ;
 No praise delighteth thee, no whispered prayer,
 Breathed by a kneeler to the midnight air.
 If costly offering, in palace or in den,
 Alike displease thee, god, what lov'st thou, then ?
 O, when despair's wild shriek goes up from burning town,
 Then, with a smile, from heaven thou lookest down.*

II.

Thy temple is some blasted battle plain,
 Strewn with the mossy skulls of ancient slain ;
 Thy priests, the howling wolf, the mountain-fox,
 That roam at daybreak from the caverned rocks ;
 Thy song of praise, the savage eagle's scream,
 Soaring above the lightning's lurid gleam.
 Thy votaries, the raven and that hooded bird,
 Whose croak, by night, amid the dead is heard ;
 Who thatches, with the hair of those that rest,
 The bloody chamber of his lonely nest.
 O, when despair's wild shriek goes up from burning town,
 Then, with a smile, from heaven thou lookest down.

III.

The din of arms delights thee, and the sound is sweet,
 When warring millions on the broad plain meet,
 When Roman falchion cleaves the gilded mail,
 When the fierce spear drives through the pliant scale,

* Macaulay's Prophecy of Capys.

When the harsh clarion roars its demon note,
And pours wild panic from its brazen throat ;
When the wolf standard summons from afar,
The armed Latin, hurrying to the war ;
When the red beacon glares with baleful light,
And glaring, like a comet, through the troubled night ;
Then, when the savage Tuscan shouteth loud,
Thy brazen chariot thunders through the cloud.
O, when despair's wild shriek goes up from burning
town,
Then, with a smile, from heaven thou lookest down.

IV.

No blood of gentle lamb is shed for thee,
Mailed son of Jove, thou lovest more to see
The living turf, around thy shrine bedewed
With gore, dripped from the beak of vulture ; when the
rude
Scythian herdsman, the libation pours
The while, with battered targe, and savage roars,
He thee invokes, by sword thy right hand wields,
By reddened lances, and by flaming shields,
To thee, whose glaring eye rejects the sacrifice,
Mocks at the incense wreathing to the skies ;
Whose victims are the warriors slain, whose altar is the
grave,
Thy best libation blood that stains the wave.
O, when despair's wild shriek goes up from burning
town,
Then, with a smile, from heaven thou lookest down.

V.

All worship thee,—from Italy's rich plains,
To where the dusky King of Egypt reigns.
The thousand islands of the Grecian sea,
The quiver-bearing Gauls shout praise to thee.
The Syrian, kneeling to the sun's bright ray,
Hails thee more potent than the god of day.

To honour thee, the life's-blood crimson rain,
 Man poureth forth, and will pour forth again.
 Many a peasant, many a king his life
 Hath yielded to the sword, thy sacrificial knife.
 O, when despair's wild shriek goes up from burning
 town,
 Then, with a smile from heaven, thou lookest down.

THE PILGRIM'S DEPARTURE.

[THE long robe, the *bourdon*, or staff, to which the bottle was fastened, the scrip, and the cockled hat of the pilgrim, were consecrated by the village priest on the eve of his departure. The novice, having confessed his sins, threw himself before the altar. Prayers were then said over him; he was invested in his robes, and conducted in procession to the limits of his native village; the cross and holy water borne before him. What a beautiful scene the pilgrim's parting would make for the pencil!]

THE sun in flaming splendour,
 Sank down behind the hill;
 Its rays grew faint on mountain-top,
 On river and on rill,
 When down before a holy shrine
 Knelt one who's bound for Palestine.

The altar's neath the storied pane,
 That dyes the sun-light red,
 Like a saint's bright crown of glory,
 It glowed upon his head;
 And many a peasant gathered there,
 Joined in the solemn parting prayer.

The priest stood at the altar
 In chasuble arrayed;
 The sun burnt red and fiery,
 Amid the forest's glade;
 Mother and sire together stood,
 With youth and maiden, beside the rood.

O'er hat and staff and sandalled shoon
The priest repeats the charm ;
That whether in Ind or Araby,
Shall keep the soul from harm ;
'Twas a touching sight the priest to see
Sign o'er the robe the crosses three.

" God guide the staff that guides thy feet
O'er boiling desert sand ;
God guard the shoon that clothe thy feet,
In many a savage land ;
This cockle hat, remember thee,
Proclaims one bound for Galilee.

" God keep thee from the desert asp,
Christ's mother shield thee well
From spear, and shaft, and crescent sword,
From Moor and Infidel.
Wherever, pilgrim, thou shalt be,
Christ's holy benison on thee."

Still lower sank the blood-red sun ;
The moon shone faint on high,
Though scarce the flame-crowned monarch
Had left the summer sky,
That sin-soiled pilgrim of the West,
Crossed his hands on his guilty breast.

No sound broke on the stillness
As from the ground he leapt ;
No sound, save one deep heart-sob,
The cry of one that wept ;
He filled his bottle at the rill,
Then hied him o'er the Eastern hill.

One look at fading village,
And the old tower on high,
As still its cross stood dark and clear
Against the western sky.
His father's home the darkness shrouds,
As o'er the moon steal dusky clouds.

Last look the pilgrim's taken
Of that dear father land;
His bone shall parch and whiten
Upon the desert sand;
His last faint gaze was turned on ye,
Ye deep, dark waves of Galilee.

THE MILLER'S SONG.

HEY! for the stone that erushes,
Ho! for the whirling sail,
When the old mill shakes in every plank
Like a vessel in the gale.

Hey! for the blast that driveth
The ponderous mill-wheel round,
When of the snow-storm showering,
We hear the mellow sound.

Hey! for the winds of winter,
When it never bloweth ill;
In the idle breeze of summer,
The miller sitteth still.

When autumn winds come piping,
From the dark rain-fraught cloud,
At the eorn's bright golden billows
The miller laugheth loud.

When the winds blow fast and fiercer,
In valley and on hill,
When the weary reaper's toiling,
Then faster drives the mill.

In the dull, gray night—the long, long night,
When the frost is on the earth,
A weary man's the miller,
As he sitteth by his hearth.

Hey! for the roaring hurricane,
That tears the forest tree,
For the savage din of tempest
Is the miller's melody.

All bright in wild December,
The whole chill night along,
O'er the buzz within, and the roar without,
Is heard the miller's song.

When the bare, bleak moor is lying
All white beneath the moon,
The north wind roars a thunder bass
To the burly miller's tune.

When the mill-sails wild are tossing,
Like a spirit's arms on high,
Like the arms of one beseeching
Help from the calm, blue sky.

Help from the savage fury
Of the wind that flies above,—
The wind that the blanched millers—
The gray old millers love.

Hey! for the stout nor-wester,
That rattles the cottage pane,
The wind is the miller's vassal,
For it grinds his yellow grain.

It may sweep o'er distant mountains,
It may roar across the hill,
It may speed along the barren moor,
But first it drives the mill.

Summer's a weary season,
Dull is the sunny earth;
'Mid the cold, gray rain of winter
Is the time for the miller's mirth.

No lover's voice seems sweeter
To her that waits to hear,
Than the trumpet shout of the tempest
Unto the miller's ear.

The miller is no coward,
Though he's pale as a frightened maid,
His cheeks are red as the first spring-rose,
In its robe of snow arrayed.

And all night long when the rushing wind
Is roaring loud without,
From the bars of the old mill window
At the stars he looked out.

THE WOODMAN'S SONG.

IN the bright May time, in the young spring's prime,
The axe he layeth by;
When the birds sing gay the livelong day,
To hail the summer nigh;
But the woods ring out to his merry shout
When the leaf is off the tree,
When the tempest clouds the forests shroud,
A merry man is he.

And he loves to sing when the forests ring
To the axe's echoing sound,—
When, as thunder loud, the oak has bowed
And crashed to the ground.
Like an armed knight, in the press of fight,
He hews with his axe away,
Through the wood's dark rank, on the marsh reed dank,
Flows in the flood of day.

No forest tree, whatever it be,
Spareth this sturdy wight ;
The oak's rough stem his blows o'erwhelm,
And the beech with its red leaf bright ;
For a hoary bole, this rugged soul
Cares not though it be of oak ;
What the lightning's spear could never sear,
Is felled with his mighty stroke.

And the silver trunk of the birch has sunk
Beneath his crushing blow ;
Thro' the beech' smooth side and the cedar's pride,
His broad keen blade will go.
Were each wood and glade in its pride arrayed,
With bud, and flower, and leaf,
To his blunted soul some pang had stole,
Some gentle thought of grief.

But the winter's hour is his time of power,
When the wild winds whistle loud ;
If the woodman spare, that tree they'll tear,
And dash it to the ground ;
And they sigh and moan, with a thunder groan,
As mourning for their fate,
As a spirit had past on the winged blast,
But mercy were too late.

When o'er your head, 'mid the pine boughs red,
You hear the night winds surge,
As the wood sprites there, for their forest care,
Were muttering a dirge.
He's a crowned king in the mild sweet spring,
For he marks his victims then ;
Of his broad axe blade he a sceptre made,
Forged in a forest den.

O the woodmen good, in the lonely wood,
Heap up the crackling fire ;
With a cruel smile they watch the while
The blazing of the fire.

And they hear the howl, and the savage growl
Of the wolf that waits without;
But what care they then, those merry men,
As they push the stoup about.

WRITTEN IN AN OLD TOWER IN
NORTH WALES.

THE sun's last gleam's on Snowdon's head,
The sky is kindling in the glow,
The light upon the mountain shed,
Is mirrored in the lakes below.

On yonder seaward-looking tower,
Falls evening's red and mellow light,
Again, as in days of splendour,
Its chamber walls grow bright.

As with some rich old tapestry
That decks a chieftain's halls,
With the gleam of ancient revelry,
The fitful splendour falls.

And the scent of the wallflower fills the air,
As when, from the spicy east,
The palmer brought the perfume rare,
For the giver of the feast.

Through the shattered breach the first pale star
Looks down upon the earth,
On the old gray rock that the night-winds mar,
On the place of the wild storm's birth.

Dreams of the past are dwelling here,
In this home of the wandering blast,
Sad thoughts of the great and mighty,
Who from the earth have past.

THE WAR SONG OF THE WELSH BORDERERS.

AWAKE! for the dragon standard
Is waving on each tower,
Awake! ye men of the mountain land,
For now is the vengeance hour.
Awake! ye men of the torrent's land,
For red are the clouds that lour.

'Tis not to chase the bloody wolf,
Upon great Snowdon's height,
It is to chase the bloody men,
And battle for the right.
Arm! arm! ye men of the lake and stream,
Against proud England's might.

We'll drive them to their postern door,
Like a shepherd a thievish hound,
We'll leap old Chester's river wall,
All armed, at a bound ;
Not an English boor, in all wide Wales,
Shall anywhere be found.

Think of the Welsh king's glory,
Ye men that guard the fold,
Think of the leaguered cities,
In the glorious days of old.
Awake! ye men of the horny hand,
And the lion heart and bold.

THE GATHERING SONG OF THE KINGS OF HARLECH.

[Adapted to the tune of a Highland pibroch.]

COME, at the hirlas* blast,
Come, as the torrent fast ;
Swift on the foemen stoop,
With the dun eagle's swoop,
Come, chiefs of the amber wreath, and the gold 'bossed
shield.†

From your home in the rock,
Come with the thunder's shock ;
Down from each crag and hill,
Fast from each mountain rill.
Come, chiefs with the amber wreath, and the gold 'bossed
shield.

Pour as the torrents pour,
Roar as the torrents roar ;
Spur on your chargers fast,
Swift as the tempest blast.
Come, chiefs of the amber wreath, and the gold 'bossed
shield.

Ere the red beacon's light,
Seare the dull clouded night
Round grey old Chester's wall,
We shall be gathered all.
Come, chiefs of the amber wreath, and the gold 'bossed
shield.

Let the silk banners crowd,
Dark as the thunder cloud ;
Let the bright spear-heads beam,
Like the blue lightning's gleam.
Come, chiefs with the amber wreath, and the gold 'bossed
shield.

* The Welsh hirlas was used either as a horn or a goblet.

† The ancient marks of rank among the British chieftains.
They are still found round the dead in cromlechs.

THE DEMON OAK.

A WELSH LEGEND.

"IN the reign of Henry IV.," says Bingley, in his book on North Wales, "Nannau, now the estate of the Vaughan family, situated on an eminence near Dolgelly, belonged to Howel Sele, who, though the first cousin of Owen Glendower, sided with the Lancastrian party. Upon one occasion, whilst these cousins were hunting together, Howel bent his bow, and pretending to take aim at a doe, suddenly turned round and shot at Owen, but the armour which he wore prevented any injury from the arrow. Owen immediately seized his kinsman ("a little more than kin, and less than kind,") who was never heard of afterwards alive; but after forty years had elapsed, a skeleton, supposed to be his, was found in the hollow of a large oak, where he had probably been hidden by Owen.

This oak was named "*Darwen Ceubren yr Ellyll*, the hollow oak of the demons," and was, to the day of its destruction in 1813, the terror of the superstitious."]

THROUGH Nannau's wood, to shout and song.
The hounds and chargers swept along,
 When leaves were sere and brown;
And foremost of the cavalcade,
That poured through thicket and through glade,
 Rode one that wore a crown.

A jewel in his bonnet shone,
His baldrick glow'd with many a stone,
 Of dark and veering light.
His bright hair on the oak leaves cast
A lustre, as the gallant past,—
 He was a goodly knight.

But louder, on that fatal morn,
Than bay of hound, or blast of horn,
 'Bove neigh of fiery horse;
O'er the deep sighing of the breeze,
Through rustling woods and rocking trees,
 Foamed on the torrent's course.

Leaving the red clouds where they slept,
The lightnings from their dark homes leapt,
 Far flash their blinding blaze :
From mountain, den, and antre vast,
Flew forth the fiercely shrieking blast,
 Unseen to mortal gaze.

Then, swifter than the storm wind's flight,
Through forest dark, with sudden night,
 The huntsmen fled away.
The sound of distant bay is heard,
Faint as the warbling of a bird,
 At breaking of the day.

Glendower and Howel, left alone,
Crouched down behind a mossy stoue,
 Some wreck of Druid times ;
Where men poured out the human gore,
In cups of rock, in days of yore,
 So say the Runic rhymes.

Bright as a marsh-sprite shone the knight,
By glimpse of that tempestuous light ;
 A sun-like ruby on his breast,
Gleamed, flickering with its prison'd fire,
The heir-loom of a royal sire,
 It bound his snowy vest.

Behind the lichen'd ruins old,
The ramparts of an ancient hold,
 They crouch them from the storm.
Again, like phantoms of the blast,
The frightened deer and hound fled past,
 The hare cowed in her form.

Then cursed Howel's cruel shaft,
His royal brother's blood had quaffed,
 Alas ! for Cambria's weal !
But the false arrow glanced aside,
For, 'neath the robe of royal pride,
 Lay plate of Milan steel.

*

*

*

A century had passed away,
When, on the eve of winter day,
 A skeleton was found,
(Hid in the hollow of an oak,
Half riven by the thunder-stroke,)
 With rusty fetter bound.

Keen blew the blast through forest tree,
'Mid winter winds fierce revelry,
 Loud as the distant wave ;
It tore the seared and blasted bole,
Then, like a charger to the goal,
 Swept o'er the haunted grave.

Past Demon's haunt, where, long ago,
Glendower seized the traitor foe,
 And chained him to the oak.
When years went by, a swineherd found,
The bleach'd bones to the old stem bound,
 Well may the raven croak.

And now, when peasants pass at night,
When ways grow dim, and grey the light,
 They pray, and hurry past ;
And cross their brow, if, through the heaven,
Comes driving fast the lurid leven,
 Or louder groans the blast.

THE WYE.

[It was on the banks of this beautiful river that Caractacus defeated the Romans. Old half crumbled towers and druidical stones are still to be seen, here and there, upon its banks.]

A RIVER flowing, circling woods between,
 Past many an ancient tower, long since the scene
 Of battle 'tween the stern dwellers of the land,
 And they, the eagle-bannered, who, with flaming brand,
 Swept o'er the world like some dread hurricane,
 Levelling the stately palace and the massive fane.
 This old druid's stone, so grey and mossed with age,
 The lifelong labour of some early sage,
 In its rock cup has held libations of their blood;
 Grim children of the Roman robber brood,
 Nursed by the wolf, fed in a forest den,
 With yet warm morsels of the flesh of men—
 Men who great shrines to demon spirits raised,
 And clanged their shields to the dread gods they praised.

Yet these rude crags that hem the river in,
 Our mountain ramparts, heard of yore the din,
 When blenched the legions from the British spear;
 What time the cowering eagle, at the savage cheer,
 Fled to his rocky nest, his ancient home,
 Back to great Tyber's city, crowned Rome.
 Sweet stream! whose ripple's whimpering tone
 More cheers my ear than dying Roman's groan,
 The Briton, leaning on his bronze axe shaft,
 The while, all weary with the war, he quaff'd
 Rich goblet of sweet mead or hydromel;
 Such are the scenes thy voice, as by a spell,
 Calls up, and fills the woods that, gathered high,
 Seem like a silent multitude that gaze into the sky.

THE EAGLE TOWER OF CAERNARVON CASTLE.

LIKE some old crazed monarch, crowned with weeds,
 And blossoms gathered from the wild field flowers,
 Art thou ; above thy ramparts and thy riven towers.
 On the lone turret, where the stock dove breeds,
 A lone flower sheds its perfume in the air,
 Whether the sky above is bright and fair,
 Or fiery billow clouds herald the storm that lowers :
 Sweet type of love that to the wreck will cling,
 And what it loveth once will love for ever,
 Nor joy, nor grief, nor weal, nor woe, can sever,—
 As faithful in the winter as in spring,—
 Constant unto the death, faithful for now and aye,
 Like beauty bending o'er the couch of one prepared to
 die.

MARCH.

THE desert winds of Araby
 With hotter glow the brown sands parch ;
 But not the storm of the Hellespont
 Drives fiercer than the winds of March.

How still the silence of its death,—
 How hushed the earth when it has past ;
 Fiercest of all the giant winds—
 Is thy unresting blast.

ON AN OLD COIN OF VESPASIAN'S,

DUG UP NEAR THE RUINS OF A PALACE.

WAS it some warrior Roman,
With cunning art and fine,
Who stamped this coin's surface
With letter and with sign?
Yes! he that grasped the pilum,
Dug metal from the mine.

Yes! he that in some camp's deep trench,
Dropped thee from mailed hand,
'Gainst Greek or swarthy Egyptian,
Had drawn the battle brand.
Yes! he that grasped the pilum,
Hath clutched thee in his hand.

He might have plundered Herod's hall,
Or the maddened Jew have slain,
When from the burning temple
Showered down the fiery rain.
Yes! he that grasped the pilum,
Trod many a bloody plain.

His gory hand, too daring,
Might have torn the veil away
That hid Jehovah's brightness
From the sullying light of day.
Ah! he that grasped the pilum,
Was no sluggard in the fray.

FEBRUARY.

THE time when skies are free from cloud,
 Though still the robin whistles loud
 In the bare garden croft,
 The catkin, on the hazel tree,
 Mistakes for summer flower the bee,
 And round it hovers oft.

Winter's last sigh, from frozen north,
 Withers the flower that ventures forth ;
 And there is wanting still
 The unseen warmth, the mellow note
 Of the wild bird with dappled coat,
 Though faster flows the rill.

When, from his winter home, the snake
 Creeps stealthy through the withered brake,
 And thoughtless of the past,
 The young leaves open over head,
 Though still their fathers, sere and dead,
 Are hurried by the blast.

When linked together, hand in hand,
 The buds break forth, a merry band
 In every meadow hedge ;
 The lark sings up amid the cloud ;
 The happy streamlet ripples loud
 Past the long flowering sedge.

And water-lilies, in a throng,
 Creep up to hear the thrush's song,
 Or notes from blackbird's bill ;
 And with a gushing voice of pleasure,
 Its little store of silver treasure
 Pours forth each little rill.

THE PIMPERNEL.*

LITTLE scarlet Pimpernel!
 None but thou canst tell so well
 What the weather change may be;
 None can tell so well as thee
 What the roving sun can see;
 None so wisely half as thee;
 When the welkin vapours shroud,
 Telleth thee, the passing cloud,
 When in east the pallid dawn
 Heralds coming of the morn;—
 Then with joy thou spreadest out
 All thy little flowers about,
 Where, in holt or upon wold,
 Smiles thy little eye of gold.
 When with clouds the heavens frown,
 Then thy head thou bendest down.
 Little weather-prophet, say,
 Fair or foul, the coming day?
 For thy eye, on sun above,
 Dwells like lover on his love;
 Like a courtier on his lord;
 Or Parsee on his god adored;
 Like kneeling Carib on the sun,
 Thou gazest till his course is run—
 Ever, ever gazing on,
 Never musing but of one.
 Come what seasons there may be,
 Still unchanged thy flower we see,
 Like a pennon in the wind,
 Fickle as a maiden's mind,
 Ever veereth round thy head,
 Till in western waves of red,

* This little wild flower is, as is well known, the English shepherd's barometer.

Thy great monarch sinketh down,
Then, too, sinks thy tiny crown.
In thy humble flower we see
Type of fixed mobility.
Winds may blow as they blow now,
Still for winds what carest thou?
Though with fury raging free,
They should shake the giant tree,
Whatsoever be their power,
They will spare thy little flower ;
E'en the bud that gems the sod,
Overshadowed is by God.
Little Persian ; songs of praise
Do thy flowerets ever raise ;
To thy God thou offerest up
Drops of dew in ruby cup ;
And when sinks the king of light,
Thy violet eyes with tears grow bright.
Till the stars, whose softer beam,
Like the sun's fair children seem,
Shine upon the meadow-ground,
Where thy blossoms most abound ;
Or, where trailing through the grass,
All thy snake-like sprays do pass.
Little scarlet Pimpernel !
None can tell us half so well
What the weather change may be—
None so wisely half as thee !

FLOWERS.

YE short-lived flowers !
That strew your leaves upon the young spring's paths
In May's sweet hours.

Ye fragile flowers !
That tessellate with many a varied gem
Earth's greenest bowers.

Ye deep-dyed flowers!
Fed by the silver dew, and canopied by cloud,
Nurtured by showers.

Ye vari-coloured flowers!
That hang your fearful heads like timid beauty
When tempest lowers.

Ye sweet-juiced flowers!
That with such varied loveliness
Kind Nature dowers.

Ye transitory flowers!
Your life is far more happy, but as brief,
As short as ours.

THE NORSEMAN'S WAR-SONG.*

Up, Bersekers! up, with the trample and roar
Of the waves that burst in on an iron-bound shore,
With the pride and the might of the surf o'er a reef,
To the sword-dance, with clamour, let's follow the chief.

Together, together, now push from the land;
Who will tarry at home by the smouldering brand?
As the blast of the tempest, the reed of the lake,
The war-axe and lance in our stout grasp shall shake.

Sharp in point and in edge as the walrus's tooth,
Neither sword-blade nor spear-point feel sorrow or ruth.
Pierce lance, and drink deep of the heart-blood within;
Come, cleave, thou good war-axe, the bone and the skin.

* Several lines of this song are taken from one of Bürger's spirited *Lieder*.

To-day we'll have vengeance, whatever betide ;
We are coming, soon coming, in pomp and in pride.
What careth the storm for the withering tree !
God pity ye, cravens ! no merey have we.

The women and children pile logs on the hearth ;
The banquet we'll share, with loud jest and fierce
 mirth ;
Already the smoke-wreaths mount up to the sky,—
Already hot flames are up blazing on high.

O long we have tarried for revel and spoil ;
The hounds have long bayed round the wide empty toil.
We ate our last morsel in sorrow alone,
Till nothing was left but the white rattling bone.

Up, warriors ! up ! ere the sun set to-day
Ye shall feast on the herds that we win in the fray ;
The hot flames are mounting the heavens again—
On together, ye sons of the warrior men !

[The *Bersckers*, mentioned in the first verse of this song, were a class of men known among the northern nations, who, making a vow at the altar of some sea god, stripped themselves to their tunic, and then, swallowing a cup of some intoxicating beverage, rushed almost naked into the army of the enemy. The deeds of these frantic men, as related in the Sagas, are quite herculean. They formed, in reality, a rude order of knighthood.]

MAY.

OF sunlight and green shade, and songs of birds, a
 happy blending,
Of perfumes, and sweet sounds, and eyes' delight,
Mild showers, and blooming boughs, a pleasure never-
 ending,
A gentle coming on of calm, cool night,—
These, these are blessings scattered in our way,
 In happy May.

In happy May—when winter, girt with hideous winds
Seeks his ice caverns; his spies work summer grief
The canker blasts the bud; the ivy creeping binds
The oak in galling chains; the chill rain spots the leaf,
They plot by night, they plot the live-long day
In mournful May.

OLD LETTERS.

OLD, brown, and mouldy pages,
Whose every leaf
Is stamped with mystic characters
Of joy and grief.

On such poor fragile monuments,
Past hope, past fear,
Past love, past scorn, past hate,
Are graven here.

Fragile creations of still frailer man,
That men outlast,
"Though from eternity, from whence he came,
The scribe be past.

O, there are tongues within these dry brown
leaves,
That speak as Autumns do;
They cry of death and sorrow,
To me—to you.

To look on thee, is the dark coffin lid
Of some old tomb to raise,
And on the mouldering dead within
Silent to gaze.

Their mute but mighty voice,
Tells of days past,
Of leaves swept from an ancient tree,
And withered in the blast.

Dear record of long-vanished days,
Whose silent spell
Invokes so potently the aged deed,
Farewell—farewell!

A WARNINGE WORDE.

TO MY LOVINGE FRIENDE, LAUNCELOT BURBAGE, 1610.

TAKE heed of what I tell thee now,
Trust not in star and broider'd vest;
Beware, dark eye and arched brow,
Beware of gently-pouting breast,
For thy good hand, and thy good brain
Are worth the four—and four again.

There's neither fiend, nor sprite, nor elf,
Can speed thee in the ways of life,
Nought but the strivings of thyself;
Nor friend can aid, nor child, nor wife,
Then give, my friend, thy utmost heed
To what may serve thee at thy need.

For friends are but a sharpened reed,
Against the desert lion's might,
As well go hew with blunted spade,
At golden targe of wizard knight.
And never breathe a word of love,
I pray thee by the gods above.

For love's a thing that cannot fail,
To leave thee at thy utmost need ;
In leaky pinnace face a gale,
Go, rather brave the ice winds' host.
When age needs care and gentler smiles,
Pray where are then Love's pretty wiles?

To build your love on woman's face,
Thou'dst better build on Goodwin's Sand—
The tide of Time sweeps o'er the place,
And now 'tis water, now 'tis land.
Than thus to peril heart of thine,
Thou'dst better drown thyself in wine.

And never dare to question me,
Or ask why drivelling man was born ;
The world's a place, I whisper thee,
Where hearts with toiling are outworn.
And ere we've ventured half way through it,
We seldom fail full well to rue it.

We're angels winged for furthest flight,
Then chained in a murky vault ;
We half obtain to wisdom's sight,
When Death to best of us cries "halt."
We just begin to look around,
When we are all clapp'd under ground.

Just like a child, his puppet toys,
The sexton lays us one by one ;
Noble and churl with crowned boys,
(Say royal Philip's god-like son.)
And in the box, a coffin call'd,
Together by grim Death we're haul'd.

Like a poor rushlight we're snuff'd out,
Ere half our scanty taper's done ;
This man that put five kings to rout,
And this man's sire and that man's son.
A few quick cycles and no more,
The world is as it was before.

Then tell me what the wise call FAME?—

 This bully stabs another sot ;

That stamps a penny with his name,

 The difference is in Nature's lot.

The world's a masquerade—how strange,

We wear a crown an hour,—then change.

This knave struts round with helm and sword,

 Or wears to-day a purple vest ;

That fool is called to-night a lord,

 And pins a star upon his breast.

To-morrow's eve in death they meet,

A white shroud wraps their head and feet.

The pall of this old blockhead king,

 Is richer for his coffin worm ;

Ere well the death-bell they do ring,

 Death stamps with livid brand his form.

Then what is PRIDE? the strutting stalk,

The aping of a stage ape's walk.

We're all but puppets at the best,

 One wears a cap and one a crown ;

The kaiser in his graveclothes drest,

 Lays sceptre, ball, and signet down.

Do coffins of a curious wood,

Bar out the earth-worm's hungry brood ?

NOTES.

"Many legions of fond fantasies."—KING JOHN.

NOTE 1.—"*A track so untrodden.*"

The New World has been slighted by the poet and the historian. Spain has its Ercilla, a soldier, who wrote an epic on his drum-head, beautiful in parts, but, as a whole, of "inferior water." Germany has a few ballads on the subject. Proh pudor! we have nought but Southey's incomprehensible "Madoc," with the charming lover Tlacolatapan; and Rogers's short poem, "The Voyage of Columbus," in which supernatural machinery is so strangely used. *Vide* the public meeting of evil spirits in some night-cellar of the Andes, in which Milton is sadly parodied, and enough sulphur is introduced to set up a respectable timber-merchant (vulgo, a lucifer match-seller). Then, for history, till Irving's delightful abridgments, and Prescott's more ambitious work, arrived in England, except Robertson's narrow view of the Conquest, we had nothing by which to measure it by our standard. Spain abounds in "unsunned treasures," that nobody can get at till its inhabitants have destroyed each other, like the cats of the fable, in civil wars. Of published works, they have their gossiping and delightful chronicles of the old soldier of Cortes, Bernal Diez; the fragments of the prejudiced "apostle of the Indies," Las Casas; Herrera's tasteless but elaborate and invaluable work the narrative of the poor Franciscan friar, Toribio, called by the Aztecs Montolinia, or "the poor man;" and last, not least, Peter Martyr's classical effusions; and Soli's poetical view of the Conquest of Mexico. But all past works, whether Spanish, native, or English, are eclipsed by the modern work of the American historian, Prescott, whose erudition, research, and patient industry, are above all praise, set as they are in so rich a chasing of picturesque and poetical imagery, and a pleasing and easy style, more purely English than that of Englishmen. Written, too, at a time when, like our own Milton, "knowledge at one entrance"

was quite shut out, he groped his way to the temple of fame, and found the door. Of Irving it were still more unnecessary to speak; his high and refined feeling, his love of England and of English things; and the purity and simplicity of his writings, are as well known to the poorest reader as the merits of Addison.

We could not conclude this note without once more alluding to Southey's "Madoc," a poem which has much of beauty, in spite of the improbability of its story; its obtrusive inconsistency, and the errors of its writer's taste. The ignominy of Columbus, and the contrast of the manners of Welsh mediæval chivalry, or *pseudo-Aztec* customs, jar, without relieving each other. It is a singular production, almost a monster, of Southey's multifarious and sometimes discordant reading. We regret that he should have passed by so many wild and adventurous scenes to select the least interesting and the most improbable. The metre is loose, lagging, and diffuse, both wanting strength and passion. If he fulfilled the first demand of the Welsh triad that heads his preface, he certainly—the worse for his fame—failed in the two latter. "*Three things should all poetry be—thoroughly erudite, thoroughly animated, and thoroughly natural.*"

NOTE 2.—SHAKSPEARE.

A blind and wandering harper,* and a poor village exile, are the two only men who stand unrivalled in the world's history. Timour equalled Attila, and Alexander, Cyrus; but these two minds sit enthroned apart in the highest empyreum. No one ever equalled Shakspeare. Some have had his sublimity—some his wit—some his humour—some his rhythm—some his dramatic power; but none have had all together.

We need scarcely apologize for alluding to the influence upon his mind, of the discovery of a New World, traceable in the "Tempest," the last of his plays, written in the peaceful retirement of that village which he had left a vagabond and a beggar. It was in glimpses of the new region that his Fancy revelled and Imagination soared her highest flights. The "Tempest," the most rainbow-tinted of his plays—is the most ærial of them all. It was the last incantation of the great magician, who, "on the brink of the grave," his rough music would now abjure. It was his last prophetic strain by which he worked his will upon our senses, ere he "broke his staff,"

"Buried it certain fathoms in the earth;
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
He [drowned his book]."

It is near "the still vexed Bermoothes or Bermudas," that the

* Homer.

scene opens. A ship is driven ashore upon one of those uninhabited islands described in any of the early voyagers; an island rude and rocky, but canopied with the richest mirages of the poet's fancy. It seems like the last fairy vision of a minstrel's mind. The air becomes instinct of life—full of noises, "sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not." The earth is covered with spirits, and the clouds open and show riches ready to fall upon us.

Yet these are points which are to be found in the bare islands of the old romances of the previous age. It is, therefore, rather in such characters as Caliban that the spirit we have described works so strongly. In this rude and chaotic form he has drawn the savage of the islands of Pearl, lighting up his rough limbs with the reflection of a storm, such as Ariel could invoke. His cruel hatred of his benefactor, the power of civilization over barbarism, the sensuality and treachery of the age—

"When wild in woods the noble savage ran,"

are finely contrasted with the delicate creatures of the elements—the Sylphs of Paracelsus. It was the Spaniard taught the Indian how

"to name the bigger light and how the less,
That burn by day and night."

'Twas the Indian showed the Spaniard

"All the qualities of the isle,
The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place, and fertile,
And brought him sea-mells from the rocks."

And how strangely combined, yet perfectly fused, is this with the English legends of witchcraft in the person of Sycorax, whose moonlit occupation it was

"The wicked dew to brush,"

with

"Raven feather from unwholesome fen."

Such as Caliban was the Carib to the Spaniard—"hag-seed"—

"abhorred slave,
Which any print of goodness would not take."

The influence descends, more or less, on the whole race of Elizabethan writers, that golden era, that rich harvest-time of genius;—rich in poetry, philosophy, and divinity—in statesmen, and in warriors, by land or sea.

NOTE 3.—CORTES AND PIZARRO.

Never were two characters more strongly contrasted : courage and ferocity—chivalry and cruelty—princely generosity and avarice. Cortes was the son of an officer, of a respectable family, of Estramadura. A student at Salamanca, he was distinguished even in youth for his wild and daring spirit. He was amorous, and, by a necessary consequence, in that stormy age, a duellist. Averse to the dull monotony of peace, he really lived only in the hot fever of war. "I came to get gold," he said, to the governor of Hispaniola, "not to till the soil like a peasant." He dressed richly, and, like Cæsar, was fond of jewels. He was more of the general than Pizarro, though not less a friend and leader of the soldier. Prescott says, "He was rather above the middle size, his complexion was pale, and his large dark eyes wore a grave expression; his figure was slender, but his chest deep, his shoulders broad, and his frame muscular. He was vigorous and agile, and excelled in horsemanship and the use of the rapier. His manners were frank and soldierlike—resolved, cool, and calculating.

Pizarro was of the meanest origin, rude and uneducated, unable even to write. He was tall and well proportioned; temperate and avaricious; addicted to play as the only amusement,

"When war or conquest was not afoot."

His favourite dress was a black coat, and white hat and shoes, in imitation of the "great captain."

NOTE 4.—MEXICO AND PERU.

The conquest of Mexico differed from that of Peru in all its attendant circumstances. The Peruvians, a mild, effeminate, agricultural people, threw themselves at Pizarro's feet when their Inca was slain; while the fiercer Mexicans, roused to desperation by the death of Montezuma, drove Cortes from their city, and were only subdued after a succession of battles.

The two countries differ in many very important features. Mexico presents, within its 16,000 square leagues of territory, every possible variation of climate. Along the Atlantic comes the *tierra caliente*, a hot region of dry sandy plains, covered with jungles of tree and flower. Here grow, in all the fertility of the tropics, the vanilla, the indigo, and the cocoa, the sugar-cane, and the banana. Then comes the temperate region, where bloom the maize and the aloe, by the side of oak and pine. Peru is a strip

of land of some twenty leagues of coast, hemmed in by colossal mountains and volcanic steepes. The plateaus, or steep sides of the Cordilleras, were the sites of the Peruvian towns and hamlets.

NOTE 5.—THE RELIGION OF MEXICO.

The Aztecs believed in a Supreme Being, thirteen superior and two hundred inferior deities, each of whom had their peculiar festival. To the god of war, whose image bore the feathers of the humming-bird upon its feet, they offered human sacrifices.

Bernal Diez says, the priests wore white garments with hoods, their hair long and matted, and their nails like wild beasts' talons. The limbs of sacrificed persons they ate, their heads they hung up for ornament; with the sacrifices they fed rattle-snakes and wild beasts kept within the temple precincts.

"We learn, for certain, that after they had driven us from Mexico, and slain above 850 of our soldiers, these beasts and snakes, who had been offered to their cruel idol to be in his company, were supported upon their flesh for many days. When these lions and tigers roared, and the jackalls and foxes howled, and the snakes hissed, it was a grim thing to hear them, and it seemed like hell.

"The walls and floors of the temples were black, and flaked with blood, and stenching."

They had a god of the air, whom husbandmen worshipped. There were images of household gods in the poorest dwelling. They believed there were four cycles in time, at the end of each of which the human race was destroyed, and the planets blotted from heaven. They told of three states of existence: for the wicked there was everlasting darkness, for the neutral an eternal trance; the good, and those who fell in battle, were alone supremely blessed—passing at once into the presence of the sun, with song and dance, to follow him daily through the heavens, to dwell in the gardens of Paradise, or to live among the clouds. The Mexican religion was stained with blood; that of the Peruvians was mild. Their great god was the sun, although they seem to have had a shadowy belief in a universal power of still higher attributes. The sun, to them, was light, and life, and love. The moon was his sister, the stars his servants, the rainbow his emanation, the thunder and lightning his ministers of vengeance.

NOTE 6.—THE DRESS AND ARMS OF THE MEXICANS.

The Mexican warriors wore vests of white quilted cotton, and cuirasses of thin gold or silver plate; above this a surcoat of feather-work; their wooden or silver helmets, fashioned like the heads of

wild animals, and adorned with feathers, gems, and gold. They wore collars, armlets, and earrings of gold and silver. Among the rich presents sent to Spain by Cortes, as proof of the greatness of his conquests, says Peter Martyr, "were two helmets covered with blue precious stones, one edged with golden bells and many plates of gold, golden knobbes sustaining the belles. The other, covered with the same stones, but edged with twenty-five golden bells, with a green fowle sitting on the top of the helmet, whose feet, bill, and eyes, were all of gold."

A king of Chalco is said to have worn as a rare ornament, a chain of the hearts of brave men set in gold. The same monarch slew two young princes, and, drying their bodies, had them placed in his palace as candelabras, to hold lights in their shrivelled hands at his banquets.

The Peruvians had bows, lances, darts, swords, slings tipped with copper or bone, and ornamented, like their helmets, with gold or silver. They wore turbans, wreathed with various-coloured cloths. According to Prescott, the Peruvians, like the Mexicans, possessed an order of knighthood.

THE END.

LONDON .
PRINTED BY SAVILL AND EDWARDS,
CHANDOS-STREET



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Form L9-50m-7,'54(5990)444

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

PR	Thornbury -
5670	Lays and le-
T622 1	gends

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 372 604 9

PR
5670
T622 1

22

